
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOCUS GROUP REPORT ON MESSAGE AND CREATIVE CONCEPTS FOR FOOD SAFETY MASS MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Submitted to:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

ORC Macro and its partner APCO Worldwide is currently working with the Food Safety Education Staff of the United States Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA/FSIS/FSES) to develop a food safety mass media campaign plan. The campaign plan will reflect changes in audience awareness and understanding of food safety issues, utilize social marketing concepts, and update the Agency's key safe food handling messages. The objective of this project is to provide a design framework for a multi-year mass media campaign that will increase the public's awareness and adoption of safe food handling behaviors. The plan will identify specific messages and approaches for each year of implementation, as well as specify campaign components, integrated marketing strategies, and an evaluation mechanism for measuring impact.

As part of the effort to develop specific messages and advertisement creative for the food safety campaign, ORC Macro conducted four research focus groups with consumers in March of 2005. Participants in these focus groups consisted of people who prepared meals for others in their family ('caregivers'), and therefore represented the target audience for the food safety campaign. Both published and unpublished consumer data, as well as social marketing and communications theories, indicate that perception of risk is an important factor in an individual's decision to change a pattern or behavior. Caregivers were selected for this research as a primary target audience because they have the incentive often needed to pay attention to safe food preparation messages and change or adopt these behaviors. The selection of the target audience is further detailed in the 'Methodology' section of this report.

The goal of the focus groups was to research caregivers' perceptions and attitudes toward potential communications messages and creative elements of a mass media campaign to increase awareness and understanding of food safety and adoption of safe food handling practices. Groups for this research ranged from five to seven participants. After each group was conducted, the moderator's guide was modified to better elicit information from the subsequent groups. Participants in each group were very engaged and provided useful feedback on each of the discussion topics.

The results from this research will be used to inform a communications messaging platform for the development of a mass media campaign plan and initial creative. Elements of the messaging platform include the brand name, core messages, endorsements (if any), colors and images, advertisement tone, as well as media formats. Additionally, this research can validate prior audience research on media campaigns and materials.

This executive summary provides a brief overview of the findings and conclusions from our research. Further detail of the findings, conclusions, and common themes can be found in the text of the report.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

Color selection of creative elements is an important decision.

Participants generally liked the color blue--Throughout the discussion of colors and images, participants were continually drawn to images and treatments that contained blue. Participants claimed that the blue treatments were “mellow,” easier to read, stand out more, and were generally more appealing. This finding was general across all treatments that contained blue. Even participants who didn’t care for the words, stated they preferred the blue color.

Red was described as an alarming color and signified “warning”-- Although red seemed to be a color liked by many participants, it was not a color they would find appealing in a food safety campaign. Many participants found the color red to be a “warning,” or to be alarming or aggressive.

Colors should contrast and complement each other--Participants tended to choose treatments that were easy to read. One of the factors that made one treatment easier to read than another was the contrast. Participants generally did not like treatments that combined similar colors or light colors. They liked contrast or clear definition among words and images. For some treatments, participants suggested adding a shadow or border in order to give the image more definition.

Messages and images need context and clarity to be fully understood.

Many participants had difficulty understanding what the term “BAC” referred to when initially shown the “BAC!” message, while others had difficulty identifying the cutting board and thermometer in the “Kitchen Common Sense” design treatment. While participants supported the idea of including images in the campaign, they wanted images to be clear and presented within a recognizable context.

Messages need to be short and catchy.

Participants were attracted to phrases that were catchy. This was true for both treatments and copy. Often, participants stated clearly that some messages were not “catchy” enough. Participants indicated that the green “BAC” character was catchy, but more so to kids.

Advertisement copy used in a media campaign should also be concise and to the point. Participants liked phrases that were shorter. In discussing various copy text, participants suggested shortening phrases that they thought were too long.

Participants don’t want to feel like they were being talked down to.

Participants continually suggested that they do not want messages that will “talk down” to them or provide them with information that should be common sense. On the contrary, participants liked phrases or messages that didn’t make them “feel stupid” and were “non-offensive.”

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An endorsement by USDA will support message credibility and purpose.

Participants seem to trust and respect the USDA and they claim that adding “from USDA” to a message adds authority and credibility. Participants even equated the USDA labeling to the Good Housekeeping *Seal of Approval*, a widely recognized endorsement. Participants mentioned that they might pick up a brochure *because* it was from the USDA. Although it is not necessary for “USDA” to be a predominant part of any message, it is important for it to be included.

Participants generally liked treatments that were easy to read.

Participants tended to like images that they could clearly see and read. They did not like treatments or fonts that they would have to get close to in order to read. Darker colors or colors that contrast were favored among participants. In the “Prepare with Care” treatment, participants did not particularly care for the ‘red and orangish’ colors because they were “difficult to read.”

Conversely, participants liked treatments that included large lettering. They liked how the reader didn’t have to be “right up against them to see them.”

Advertisement copy should be concise, yet fully communicate the intended message.

Participants remarked that they may skim copy and that noting words or phrases that are key, or particularly stand out, is a good way to get their attention. They are not as likely to read lengthy copy, even if it is accompanied by an appealing visual. As an indication of this, participants throughout the groups repeatedly cut the length of the sample copy direction. However, participants also indicated that copy should not be so short that that message, or call to action, is unclear. They want to walk away from the message knowing what they are supposed to do.

Photos of people in natural, everyday situations received the most positive feedback.

Participants indicated that some of the family groupings shown to them seemed staged and that the people in the photos look like they have been standing in their positions too long. They also did not like photos that seemed to relate only to holidays or to “once a year” situations. They welcomed photos that were “regular occurrences” and seemed more year-round. Receiving the most positive feedback was the image of the boy eating grapes out of the fridge.

Participants were immediately turned off from photos that related to illness or hospitals, as this seemed too realistic and depressing. Participants did not like photos that they perceived “didn’t have anything to do with food.”

Participants indicated that television should be the primary media for a food campaign.

Participants stated that “television reaches the most people.” This is where participants expect to see a food related ad. In addition, they had several suggestions regarding when to run such an ad—during a soap opera, during the news (both morning and evening news), during cooking shows, etc. It was mentioned however, that not everyone has cable or satellite television, suggesting that broadcast and/or public television might be the way to go.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The USDA has successfully branded educational messages and campaigns on food safety. Research indicates that prior campaigns have increased awareness of the four basic food safety messages: *clean, separate, cook, and chill*. However, the same research also indicates that there is a gap between consumer knowledge, and their use of the correct safe food handling practices. The multi-year mass media campaign plan for the USDA/FSIS/FSES will build upon the awareness generated by previous food safety education efforts and develop a plan based on social marketing principles designed to move audiences from the contemplation of practicing safe food handling techniques, to performing and/or maintaining these practices.

By definition, a campaign utilizing social marketing principles targets a specific and relevant audience. The ORC Macro team and the USDA client established parameters of a target audience based on two primary factors: 1) current level of safe food handling knowledge, and 2) role as a food preparer. As noted, research indicates that attitudes toward food and nutrition issues are difficult to change. Those audiences who already demonstrate some level of knowledge are easier to move to the desired behavior change. Based on this data, the team determined that the campaign should target those consumers who have already been reached with the previous food safety messages. Additionally, because risk perceptions must be extremely high for individuals to consider a behavior change, especially when involving an activity or other outcome they enjoy, those who take responsibility for the care of others—or ‘caregivers’—were determined the primary target audience.

To establish more specific knowledge about the ‘caregiver’ target audience, ORC Macro conducted formative research with these consumers. Prior to the focus groups, the ORC Macro team conducted an extensive review of the media, audience, and theoretical landscapes in which a mass media campaign on food safety would operate. The landscape analysis formed preliminary parameters for the development of campaign elements, including the media types and communications messages for the campaign. The intent of the focus groups was to help extend our knowledge based on prior audiences research, to that more specific to ‘caregivers,’ on these same communications issues. The focus groups tested participant responses to specific creative elements for insight into the development of communications messages and creative execution that will produce effective campaign results.

For this research, ORC Macro conducted four focus groups among ‘caregivers’ in two U.S. cities (Albuquerque, NM, and Columbia, SC). The landscape analysis informed the strategy for selection of the participants, including development of the screening guide. Each group consisted of five to seven participants and lasted approximately an hour and a half. The groups were designed to discuss various elements of a mass media campaign. The findings from this research will be used as a first step in formulating the multi-year mass media campaign plan.

Background

Conducting focus groups is a qualitative research method, helpful in gaining feedback, individual perceptions, and ideas that cannot be obtained through quantitative research. For this study, ORC

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Macro conducted a set of focus groups to better understand caregivers' perceptions of preliminary communications messages and brands, images, and advertisement copy direction for a mass media campaign. The goals of the study were to determine which, if any, communications messages appeal to this audience, creative methods to enhance messages, and preferred advertisement and outreach methods.

For the purposes of our research, a "caregiver" was defined as someone who prepares at least three meals a week for children under the age of 10 or adults over the age of 60 in the household. ORC Macro recruited caregivers who were approximately representative of the population by gender and race/ethnicity in the four cities selected. However, note that information from focus groups is never intended to be projectable to the general population. Data are intended to be representative of the participants only.

Participants

ORC Macro conducted four focus groups in two U.S. cities. The cities were selected to provide some geographic diversity. The following table displays the locations, dates, and times of each group.

Focus Group Participants

Location	Date	Times	Participants
Albuquerque, NM	03/15/2005	Group 1: 6:00 to 7:30 Group 2: 8:00 to 9:30	Group 1: caregivers Group 2: caregivers
Columbia SC	03/17/2005	Group 1: 6:00 to 7:30 Group 2: 8:00 to 9:30	Group 1: caregivers Group 2: caregivers

ORC Macro used independent firms in each city to recruit participants and developed a screener to aid in the participant selection process. All participants met the following eligibility requirements:

- Individuals were excluded from consideration if they had participated in another focus group in the past year.
- Individuals were excluded from consideration if they had any food service or grocery industry workers living in their household.
- Individuals were excluded from consideration if they were a State or Federal Government employee, or if such employees resided in their household.
- Individuals were excluded from consideration if they were a university employee such as a researcher working for a cooperative extension.
- ORC Macro did not specifically select participants based on their race or ethnicity, however, recruiters were instructed to ensure that the final set of participants in each group was approximately representative of the characteristics of each geographic location.
- Individuals had to demonstrate some current knowledge of safe food preparation and safe food handling by rating a minimum score of "2 points" on the screening questionnaire.

ORC Macro has attached the Participant Screener as Appendix A.

Moderators

ORC Macro provided a professionally trained moderator—Ms. Lynn Halverson—and a note taker for each group. The moderator participated in the conceptualization of this project and the development of the Moderator’s Guide. All staff on this project debriefed often to discuss any findings and to identify themes.

At the conclusion of all of the focus groups, the entire project team met to review the findings and conduct a more systematic theme analysis, using the notes and the observations of the moderator and note taker.

Moderator’s Guide

The moderator’s guides were developed jointly by ORC Macro and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) client to ensure that the completed guide met all of the research criteria for the consumer testing phase of the research. In addition to frequent e-mail communication, ORC Macro and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) conducted several conference calls to clarify topic areas and key questions for the focus groups. The guides were structured as follows:

Introduction

- This segment enabled the moderator to introduce himself/herself and gave the participants an opportunity to introduce themselves. This segment also included an “ice-breaker” question for the participants.

Discussion Topics

- Each focus group was divided into several discussion segments:
 - Conceptual Messages**—participants were shown only the black and white text of various messages and asked to comment on their overall appeal.
 - Colors and Images**—Participants were shown the same messages, but with more developed design elements. For this discussion, the messages were creatively designed using color, different fonts, various word placement, and sometimes including images.
 - USDA Endorsement**—Participants were asked what, if any, impact the USDA label had on their perception of each of the conceptual messages.
 - Creating New Messages**—Participants were then given the opportunity to use the materials that had been discussed to create their own advertisement copy. Participants were allowed to modify the words and images used for the exercise, as well as add words and images using colored markers. Participants were then asked to describe their advertisement to the group.
 - Copy Direction**—Participants were shown short paragraphs that correspond with some of the conceptual messages. They were asked to comment on the wording and interpretation of these paragraphs.

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Family Groupings—Participants were shown various photographs of family groupings or individuals and asked to discuss how they interpreted each photo. Participants were probed for responses regarding the relationship of the individuals in the pictures and how appropriate each one was for a food campaign.

Media Placement—At the end of each discussion, participants were asked about the specific communications mediums and media outlets on which they would expect to see a food campaign similar to the type discussed.

False Close

- This segment allowed the moderator to leave the room and confer with the focus group observers to determine if there were any additional questions that should be asked before adjourning the group.

Typical for focus group research, the moderator's guide was modified after each group was conducted. The changes were made based on findings from each group and allowed the subsequent focus groups to explore certain areas more thoroughly. ORC Macro has attached two examples of the Moderator's Guides as Appendix B.

Documentation

Each focus group was videotaped and audiotaped. Transcripts were prepared from the audiotapes by Word Wizards, Inc., a professional transcription firm. Audiotapes will be provided to the USDA.

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FINDINGS

Focus group testing often leads to clear determinations about what direction a creative campaign should take, as certain themes continue to be reinforced in group after group. With this project, no such clear direction was determined. While some of the messages, some of the artistic approaches, and some of the family groups tended to be received more favorably than others, no clear “winner” appeared as a result of these focus groups. However, participants did give many clear indications of wording, concepts or ideas that did – and did not – “work” for them.

The objective of this report is to discuss in some detail the reactions of the focus groups to each single element presented to them, and then to summarize the common themes and ideas that did emerge upon completion of all four of the groups.

Conceptual Messages

The first task presented to each of the focus groups was to provide off-the-cuff reactions and impressions of six conceptual messages to determine which appealed to them and why. The phrases tested included—

- Food Safe
- Kitchen Smarts
- Kitchen Common Sense
- Fight BAC!
- Prepare with Care
- Be Food Safe...Fight BAC!

Phrases were presented to each group randomly so that the order in which they were presented did not affect the overall results from all four groups.

The primary finding from the overall discussion of the conceptual messages was that the message should educate the audience on the things that they do not know, but at the same time, affirm that they are doing a good job of preparing meals. This theme first emerged in the original discussion of the six conceptual messages listed above, and then continued to be reinforced through subsequent discussions of colors and images and copy direction.

Food Safe

Overall reactions to the phrase “Food Safe” were not very positive. There wasn’t anything that they particularly didn’t like about it; the phrase simply did not resonate with them positively or negatively.

Actually the phrase really doesn’t do much for me in terms of coming to mind something that’s useful. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

It’s pretty bland. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

I don’t like it. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

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It does nothing for me. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

If it's supposed to be catchy, it's not. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Participants also had various explanations about what the phrase was intended to convey.

Making sure the food's clean and washed. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Properly refrigerated. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Relying on your grocery stores or government or anybody else, you know, in ensuring a safe food supply. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Keeping perishables in the refrigerator instead of leaving them out. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Preparation, being safe in preparation. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

It's just food and safe – maybe “food safety.” **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Kitchen Smarts

“Kitchen Smarts” implied issues like “safety with knives” or “make sure you wipe up spills” to some participants, rather than food safety.

Sounds like a store. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Not the stove being on... **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Something along the lines of short-cuts in cooking and ways of doing things that are more efficient. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Organization. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

I guess you maybe you could be kind of smart in the way you're preparing food in the kitchen. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Know the do's and don't's about how to prepare food, different kinds of food. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

There is no guessing on what on earth it's talking about. They are going to be teaching stuff about the kitchen that I need to know. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Maybe tips, ideas, little things that we don't take into consideration sometimes. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

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I think of street smarts. That is the same type of things that's in the kitchen.

ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM

It makes me feel like I'm about to be told something. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I got the same feeling that it's going to tell me something like, don't cut yourself with your knife. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

"Smart kitchen" would sound better but then you're thinking a refrigerator that keeps track of what you've got in it. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

That's like me telling my husband: you don't have any kitchen smarts. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

While some participants seemed to like the word "smarts," others did not particularly care for it. One participant suggested changing the phrase Kitchen Smarts to Kitchen Savvy.

"Smarts" is a good word that's been used for a lot of things. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

"Smarts" is a good word. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

When I see "Kitchen Smarts" I keep wanting to change and say "Kitchen Savvy," and I don't know why but I don't like the word, "Smarts." **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Other participants reacted negatively to this phrase, stating that it wasn't catchy or didn't really tell them much about food preparation.

It's not catchy enough – you know what I'm saying – it's like something is missing. "Kitchen Smarts." If there was a small kid who was looking at that and was like, "What does that mean?" **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

It really doesn't tell me anything about the food preparation or anything like that. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

One aspect of this phrase that several participants did like, however, was that it was short.

Short and to the point. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I'm just sticking on "Kitchen Smarts." I don't know. I don't know why, for some reason it's just shorter. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

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Kitchen Common Sense

“Kitchen Common Sense” was liked by some of the participants because they said that the phrase “made sense” and didn’t talk down to them. They commented that the phrase implied that they would be introduced to new concepts and common sense knowledge that possibly hadn’t occurred to them previously. Some participants decided to shorten the phrase themselves and refer to it as “Kitchen Sense.”

That makes good sense. I’d probably read it if that was the title. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

That doesn’t make you feel stupid, either. If you go to read it and you don’t realize that, you know, it’s like, well, it is kind of common sense, but I never thought about it that way. To me, I wouldn’t feel stupid if I was looking at tips and didn’t realize I didn’t know something. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

I like it. Because it’s common sense, it’s like a lot of things. Use common sense, most people don’t use common sense. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

“Kitchen Sense” is good. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

As with “Kitchen Smarts,” some of the participants interpreted the phrase to refer to general kitchen safety rather than safe food handling.

Use common sense when you’re in the kitchen. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Use common sense when you’re preparing, too. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Don’t drop anything on the floor? **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Well, you might think of things in terms of like sharp knives. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

That’s the word that came to my mind, tips. Tips, usefulness in the kitchen. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Making sure that everything’s unplugged when you’re finished, you know, because the kitchen can be dangerous. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Make sure the pan handles are turned correctly and stuff like that, you know. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Some participants seemed uninterested in hearing information that is either common sense, or they felt that someone was trying to tell them something that they already knew.

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So this makes me roll my eyes because I've been cooking for 20 years, you know, and I think, "Come on, I know some things already. Are you giving me credit for all the things that I know?" **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I think there might be some people that would see that and say, "I've got common sense, I don't need to read it." **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Just as some people liked "Kitchen Smarts" because it was short and to the point, participants seemed to think that "Kitchen Common Sense" was too long.

I think actually "Kitchen Smarts" is just like shorter, do you know what I'm saying? Like instead of "Kitchen Common Sense," it's "Kitchen Smart." **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

[Kitchen Common Sense is] a little long. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Fight BAC!

The focus groups' reactions to "Fight BAC" focused upon two major issues: clarity (or lack thereof) of the term 'BAC', and the image of "fighting."

In every single group, participants said that, while they knew that "BAC" was intended to be a catchy, short phrase for 'bacteria', "the general public" and "most people" would not be so savvy. They were sure that "Fight BAC!" would lead to confusion.

"Fight BAC!? What the hell is BAC!?" **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

To me it's common sense—that would be bacteria—but other people wouldn't get it. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

I knew what you were talking about, bacteria, but to just open the paper or something... **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Fighting bacteria, that's what I think. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I don't think [that would be clear]. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Bacteria, yeah. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Yeah, B-A-C [are the] first three letters of bacteria. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

[The] first thing popped in my mind is probably bacteria. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

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Some participants focused on the word “fight.” Interestingly, many of them expressed negative feelings about the phrase “Fight BAC!” because they did not want the government to promote the concept of “fighting” ...even bacteria!

Well, fight BAC [could mean] family problems, other issues. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

It gives me the impression that I am under attack all around me and I need to do something about it. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

One person indicated, though, that the term did attract one’s attention.

The word “fight” does grab you, though. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

A couple of participants thought “BAC!” might be a typographical error.

If you just walk into the grocery store, you think, oh, somebody doesn’t know how to spell. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Somebody doesn’t know how to spell. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Some participants suggested using the entire word, bacteria, rather than just BAC.

Fight bacteria. Don’t use “Fight BAC!” **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Why not put bacteria? To me, B-A-C just doesn’t ... I mean, I can find all kinds of words that come from that. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Prepare with Care

“Prepare with Care” did not engender much excitement from participants during the initial discussion of conceptual messages, but seemed to be received more positively later on in the focus groups when people were asked to develop their own messages. During the initial discussion of the conceptual phrases, “Prepare with Care” appeared to convey the message of safe food preparation more clearly than some of the other phrases, most notably “Kitchen Smarts” and “Kitchen Common Sense.” Here are some of their initial reactions to “Prepare with Care”:

It’s talking about preparing and the beginning of cooking or the beginning of something. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Well, it’s clearer; you know, there isn’t any question that you’re talking about preparing food with care, to be clean or to be safe and not taking the steak out on a plate and putting the steak back. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Just preparing with care, just making sure everything’s clean and using common sense on how to clean your food and things like that. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

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Safe handling of food. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Cooking it long enough. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Prepare, to prepare with care means to be careful [...] preparing your meal and cooking it long enough, that type of thing. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Upon further discussion, a number of participants – particularly in the South Carolina groups – decided that they generally liked the phrase. They stated that it “catches the eye.” Others noted that it sounded “soft” and might be geared more toward females.

I like that. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

I like that one. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

That just catches your eye. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

It’s soft and if you think about the majority of people who do the majority of the cooking in the home is the female; then you want something soft that’s going to grab the eye, but not bite, you know. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

I like that. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Participants in the Albuquerque groups, however, were less positive toward “Prepare with Care.” They suggested that it was too wordy or too broad.

It doesn’t thrill me. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

It’s so broad; I mean, are you going from a meat point of view? **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Wordy. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

I’m going to be told something. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I just don’t like it. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Be Food Safe...Fight BAC!

After seeing “Fight BAC!” by itself, participants were happy to see the phrase presented within a more specific context. The inclusion of “Be Food Safe” seemed to help the participants understand what “BAC!” represented.

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That's better to me. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

A little bit better. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

That works. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

[It says] fighting bacteria but now you've got the food in there so you know.
ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM

It directs you to what you're saying, fight bacteria. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

However, some participants continued to say that the word BAC should be the full word, bacteria.

The Food Safe Fight BAC, I don't understand the message, but again you need...the bacteria needs to be stretched out. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Others still said that it was not catchy or clever enough.

It's not good. It seems like somebody's trying really, really hard to be clever. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I don't care for it. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

And it's not real catchy, if they are looking for catchy. Unless you are giving every household a pamphlet and you are going to put that on the front. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: COLORS AND IMAGES

Colors and Images

Once the groups had discussed possible messages, they were asked to review artwork, specifically font styles and images that had been developed to convey those messages. They were asked to focus upon the artistic concepts – the colors, images and overall appearance – rather than to focus again upon the words. In other words, they were asked to identify the colors, text styles, images, and other physical aspects of the message that would make the message likable or unappealing.

As with the conceptual messages, these creative concepts were shown to each group in random order so that order of presentation did not bias their comments.

Overall Comments Regarding Colors

Generally, participants seemed to be attracted to blue images and lettering.

My first impression was the one on the bottom right – the blue, all blue – that just looks more appealing to me. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I like [the] blue one better because I can read it easier. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

The blue one [...] stands out. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

I do like the blue better [...] I think it's good to have that there, it keeps it from being too simple. The color is easy to look at it. It's not quite the contrast that a black on white or the red with the white lettering. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Although red seemed to get their attention, many participants said quite clearly that they did not want to see food safety information in red because the color red implied “warning” to them.

The red is the warning.[...] but the red, again, gets my attention. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

[The red] immediately gets you to stop and pay attention to what that's saying. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I've been taught all my life, especially when I was in the military...red is a warning, and it ...if you see a stop sign, you see a caution tag or something of the nature, they're generally red. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

The red grabs me as a warning; you know, something needs to be paid attention to. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Participants did respond positively to color contrasts. In some cases, they said that contrasting colors helped them distinguish between different items in the image.

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: COLORS AND IMAGES

Blue and orange are complementary colors and so they pop and they let you see each thing a little bit more easier. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I like contrast. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Although it was noted that the use of red and blue color schemes would be patriotic in nature, participants did not feel that a government campaign must incorporate these colors.

Not necessarily because it's coming from a government agency but because it looks good. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Whereas the blue and the red, they're opposite so you can distinguish right away what's separate. [It's] patriotic or something. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Each of the six messages was created in various colors and shown to the participants one message at a time. Participants were asked to comment on the colors, images, lettering, etc., rather than the message itself.

Food Safe...Fight BAC!

The Food Safe...Fight BAC! treatment was tested in four different color combinations. Three of the treatments used only one color, while the fourth consisted of a combination of red and blue.



Food Safe
...Fight BAC!



Food Safe
...Fight BAC!



Food Safe
...Fight BAC!



Food Safe
...Fight BAC!

The treatment for “Food Safe...Fight BAC!” received the most negative reactions. As a style, it was seen as being too much like a logo that participants would only expect to see in print form. In several groups, participants said derisively that it “looked like a bumper sticker” that no one would want to put on their car.

I would say the red and blue together, but it looks like it should be just a bumper sticker. That's it; and I would not put that on my car. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: COLORS AND IMAGES

Color preference was a major topic of discussion with this particular image. Some of the strong ideas for and against the use of red were addressed in this discussion. Others had clear preferences for the blue version of this design.

I think the “Fight BAC!” in red, that seems more aggressive. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I just like the blue and white. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Or maybe if “food” and “safe” were both in blue and then “Fight BAC!” was in red. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

It’s just more appealing to me because I don’t like the red when we’re talking about food, for some reason. [...] That’s probably what it is, blood. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I don’t know why I don’t like [the red] either. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

My first impression was the one on the bottom right—the blue, all blue—that just looks more appealing to me. I don’t like the red ones. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Well, I like the “Fight BAC!” [in] red. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Yeah, but that “Fight BAC!” [in] red might be a little too much, though. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Participants liked the size of the letters, especially when compared to some other treatments.

[I like] the size of the letters. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

I like the fact that you can enlarge that as to where the others are small, and you’ve got to be right up against them to see them. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Food Safe from USDA...Prepare with Care

This treatment included “Food Safe” in large type. The word “safe” was written in white letters within a colored box. Underneath the word safe was “from USDA...Prepare with Care.” It is similar to the previous artwork, but the wording is slightly different.

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: COLORS AND IMAGES



Again, some negative comments were made regarding the general appearance of this treatment. Participants indicated that this treatment looks very common—like a supermarket sign or a bumper sticker.

What I was going to say on this one is that Food Safe, the way it's presented makes it look like a super market sign. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Like a logo, bumper sticker. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

It looks like something that you would get at the fair. Give it to your kid and then throw it away maybe the next day if it lasted that long. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

This looks very common. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

This one just doesn't do anything for me. I mean I don't care for it. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

It's almost antagonizing or it's cold. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Others, however, said that they liked it.

It emphasizes safe. It separates it; it's its own entity. It just separates it. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I love, in design, I love that kind of thing when you go from one thing to sort of the negative, it helps you define it, but I would like to have seen SAFE maybe in all caps so that there is a little tiny triangle on the edges of the S's on the E that make it hard to define it as sort of a negative space of the word FOOD. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I love *avant garde*. That's a great font to use, but if they went all caps in the SAFE part, it might have made it more blocky and more of its own entity than having these little wingy triangles on the edges. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I like [how] the bolder, thicker [letters] throw up everything in my face. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: COLORS AND IMAGES

Although there were not too many comments made with regard to the colors used for this particular treatment, those made favored the red and blue color combination.

I like the blue, but for some reason, the red and blue, that'd get your eye. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I like the red with the blue over there. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

I like the red and blue. The one on the right because there is enough contrast. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: COLORS AND IMAGES

Kitchen Smarts From USDA - Prepare with Care

Participants were then shown a treatment that said “Kitchen Smarts From USDA Prepare with Care.” The images included various color combinations of red, green, and blue. “Kitchen Smarts” was in large text, while “From USDA” and “Prepare with Care” were in smaller text at the top and bottom, respectively.



A number of participants in all groups said that they liked the “Kitchen Smarts” logo.

I like the way that’s worded. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

It’s a good one. I like that one; it’s non-offensive. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I would pick it up as a brochure and look at it because it lets me know it’s probably USDA to tell me something I need to know about the kitchen and that I do want to be careful when I cook. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Yeah, that one caught my eye. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

I like this. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

A few participants, however, did have negative reactions to this treatment.

To me it’s wrong. That’s not the point, you know, “Kitchen Smarts,” just like I said there, you know, that’s the main focus of that is food preparation. And that should be the one that stands out, then you can have the Kitchen Smarts, you know, in smaller lettering. But having the ... to me they’re reversed. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: COLORS AND IMAGES

It sends me a confusing message, because if I don't know what this is about—Kitchen Smarts – Prepare With Care. Okay, so how do I get kitchen smarts? Or what am I preparing with care? It just raises more questions, and I'll just blow right past it.

ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM

Many participants mentioned that they liked the font used in this treatment. The font was described as “old school” and reminded participants of children, which was appealing.

I also love the kind of typewriter, old-school font of the “Prepare with Care,” the sort of simple period at the end. It reminds me of what probably you have taught me in a pamphlet that I got, and it doesn't talk down to me. And I also like the fact that the T and the E are connected, I don't know why, but I like that. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I think that this font that they used is much softer and much more accessible to the home. Where we have feelings of warmth in our home. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I liked all of them because I like the lettering, actually, the way they have the lettering. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Well, I like the font that they used on it. I like the “Prepare with care” and the “USDA” is in small print. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I like the font for home because for some reason it reminds me of children. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Color preferences on this logo were very mixed.

I would have to go with the light blue or the green and then the red and blue. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

The light blue and green is nice. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I like the light blue. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I don't like the little words around the light, but I like light blue color. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I like the dark blue with the red – that's what I like at the right-hand corner. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

I can see the dark blue better. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I like either the dark blue or the green. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I like the dark blue one, too. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: COLORS AND IMAGES

I like the blue and the green. I like green, as you probably can tell – but I like green so I like the blue and green. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I like the red one, though. I do like the red one. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I like the red one on that one; I don't know why. It stands out really good.
ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM

I like the red only because no matter where it is in my kitchen, it is going to remind me to be smart. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Kitchen Common Sense

The Kitchen Common Sense treatment included a picture of a cutting board and a thermometer. The cutting boards were shown in three colors – blue, red, and white. The blue and red cutting boards had white lettering, while the white cutting board had black lettering. The image of the thermometer was in shades of gray and black on all three examples.



Participants consistently misidentified the digital thermometer and cutting board on “Kitchen Common Sense.”

What is that stick thing? Is it a thermometer? **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I know it's really silly but I couldn't tell what it was. Now I can see that it is a thermometer.
ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM

Is that supposed to be a cutting board? **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I thought it was a flag or a sign or some type. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: COLORS AND IMAGES

I thought it was a clipboard. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I thought it was a flip chart. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Thermometer, maybe – I don't know what that is. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

You'd have to think a minute to figure out what that was; and we know that's a cutting board, I guess. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Are we looking at a cutting board or are we looking at a book? **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

It's a transistor. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Participants were not opposed to the use of these images, but indicated that if such images are used, they should be more developed/dimensional, and include images of food, for example, vegetables next to the cutting board, or the thermometer in a meat dish.

If you had a turkey and it was in back of the turkey then you would understand what it was all about. But just alone, it looks like you are in trouble. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Maybe if there were food there [...] Like some vegetables, fresh vegetables. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Or maybe have a meat item sticking out of. [...] Yeah, like a little chicken or something. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

However, one participant noted that putting a thermometer in a turkey may inadvertently signal that thermometers are only needed for holiday cooking or special occasions.

If you put a turkey there then people might think, well, I just need it on poultry. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

When asked about color, participants once again seemed to favor blue.

Blue. It caught my eye first. It's mellow. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

I do like the blue better. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

I probably wouldn't pay it much attention [...] it's kind of plain. Of the colors, the blue does catch my eye at best. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

I like the blue and white. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I like the blue, too. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: COLORS AND IMAGES

A couple of participants liked the red treatment, even though they felt that the red signified a warning.

Red and white are better. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Red is a warning, red is a warning sign. So, red would be the best out of the three of them, and it catches your eye. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

One participant had an additional suggestion regarding the lettering.

I would say that the white lettering needs to have some sort of shadow or border, or something that would define it a little more, to give it some three dimensional, and not just look like something somebody printed on their little home computer. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

The black and white treatment was described as “boring” and “not eye-catching” by participants in all of the groups.

Be Food Safe...Fight BAC!

The image combining the “Food Safe” and “Fight BAC!” messages included a character to represent “BAC” inside a black “no” sign. The text for the copy was red, while the “BAC” character was green. “Fight BAC!” was in larger lettering at the bottom of the image, while “Be Food Safe” was at the top.



Initial responses to the “Fight BAC” logo were quite negative in all of the focus groups. For most participants, the initial reaction to “Be Food Safe...Fight BAC!” was that it was designed for children, and not for them.

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: COLORS AND IMAGES

That does seem to be [...] directed more toward younger kids. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

The picture and the concept, I would say, would catch an elementary student's eye. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

My kids would love it. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

It would give me something to teach my kids. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Maybe if you'd be like in a kindergarten class or something like that. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

It looks kiddish, though. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Yes, that does seem to be generated... well, directed more toward younger kids. When they're at school, they're not preparing the food. When they're at home, if they're preparing food, most likely the parents are going to be there to teach them about those things. I think that would be really wasting the proceeds. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

This looks like it should be in a youth magazine... **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

A number of participants and specific negative comments directed toward the green BAC! character.

The picture just doesn't do anything for me; the words do. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Maybe make bacteria small on the little green man. Spell the word out. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

It doesn't do anything for me. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

It belongs on a road sign. That's ... the slash through it; you know, don't turn here or you know ... those are fine, but not in ... to me it doesn't do it in advertising. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

It needs to be more slimy and drippy. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

It looks like he's lost his diaper. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Interestingly, despite their almost uniformly negative comments about the "BAC" character, virtually all of the focus groups overwhelmingly utilized the "BAC" artwork in the 'Creating New Messages' segment (see page 32). This issue will be discussed further in that section of the report.

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: COLORS AND IMAGES

Prepare with Care...Be Food Safe from USDA

Participants were then shown a treatment that included the words “prepare with care - Be Food Safe from USDA” and had one of two images of a pot on it. One of the pots had a lid, while the other one did not. The text and pots were shown in various colors.



This treatment generated lots of comments! Some people liked the pot with a lid, others liked it without a lid, some thought there should be food in the pot, and others either liked or disliked the fact that the pot lid “bumped up” against the words in the image.

If you had to have a pot at all, which I don't like, I would rather have the one uncovered.
COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM

And I think having the lid on the pot so that it's not so much white in the picture. It's eye catching.
ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM

I like the one without [the lid]. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

The one with the cover makes it harder. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

It (the pot) seems extraneous and takes up space. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I think the pot is too much. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: COLORS AND IMAGES

The pot to me has nothing to do with it. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Participants had mixed reviews regarding whether or not the handle of the covered pot should blend in with the text.

I'm thinking maybe it's the top that I don't like because the way it is blending in with the lettering. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

I like the way the upper left hand pot kind of extends into the text a bit and the other is a little too much space down here. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

When creating their own messages (see 'Creating New Messages' section), several offered suggestions on how they would enliven/improve this treatment.

As with most of the artwork shown to the groups, the color blue again emerged as a clear favorite among participants. Participants described the blue treatment as standing out more, easier to read, and catchy. Several also commented on the fact that blue and orange complemented each other.

I love blue. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

I actually like this blue one. I like that blue one right there, "Prepare with Care."
COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM

I like the blue. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I think the blue one stands out more. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

I believe that the blue and the red is right. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

See the blue in the lower right hand corner catches my eye. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I like blue one better because I can read it easier. The other ones, it's hard to read that gold and orangeish color. The blue I can read. I can read it from here, yes. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I was going to say that the blue one is easier for me to read. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Blue and orange are complementary colors and so they pop and they let you see each thing a little bit more easier. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

A few participants mentioned the green treatment as one that they didn't particularly care for.

The green is not very attractive. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: COLORS AND IMAGES

The green ain't happening. **ALBUQUERQUE - 3-15-05 - 8 PM**

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: USDA ENDORSEMENT

USDA Endorsement

During the discussion of images, the USDA-endorsed treatments were often recognized by participants. The moderator further probed the groups for insights regarding the value of the USDA label and its use in communications messages.

Consistently, participants said that the messages were strengthened with the USDA endorsement. They indicated that the USDA labeling provided credibility to the message and campaign, and they repeatedly said that they view the USDA as a respected authority on food and safety issues in which they have faith and confidence.

We wouldn't be eating anything if it didn't have USDA approved. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

To me I have a lot of faith in [the USDA label]. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

It lends it some authority. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

You would lead credibility to [the USDA label], whatever it is, document or commercial or advertisement. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

You wouldn't eat hamburger meat that didn't have USDA printed on it. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

It would mean more coming from the USDA. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

I wanted the USDA on there, because again, Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval for those that it's important to. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

While most participants said that the USDA message did not have to be in bold, or large print, they indicated that it should be included, in at least small font.

It doesn't have to be bold USDA...that can be in small print... **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

In particular, "Prepare with Care," or variations thereof had a more favorable response when paired with the endorsement. Participants who may previously have felt the message was too broad indicated that the endorsement helped them clearly define the issue. Moreover, many participants felt that the USDA endorsement softened the concern some had about messages they viewed as "talking down" to them. Participants believe the USDA to be an authority on issues regarding food safety.

[Does this add...] I think it does because...they're taking some type of role in making sure that you "Prepare with Care;" you know, that the food's safe. They care. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: USDA ENDORSEMENT

Because it's clear... "Be Food Safe from USDA" tells me exactly what we are talking about..
ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM

It doesn't speak down to me because the USDA is something that I recognize as an expert, but I agree with what he said about the look of it, but adding that kind of attribution gives it a little credence for me. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: CREATING NEW MESSAGES

Creating New Messages

Participants were asked to create their own messages and visuals for a campaign that would be likely to reach them with safe food handling practices. They were supplied with materials from each of the images and messages discussed and could also add items to their messages. This included four more “fun” images of the “BAC” character, attached as Appendix C.

When asked to create a communications message of their own, participants consistently combined several of the messages presented and discussed. When probed further and asked to select a key point within their message, many chose “Food Safe from USDA.”

I used “Prepare with Care” and then “Kitchen Smart—Be Food Safe from the USDA”. I thought it was important to have that. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I like the Be Food Safe to be large. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

In the previous discussion about artwork, participants tended to react negatively to the “BAC” image. However, during this creative exercise almost all of them included “BAC” images in their new messages. They often explained that they needed a visual to convey their message, and the “BAC” characters showed activity, which they wanted to show in their messages. Some participants said that they included the “BAC” character because it would appeal to their children.

I like this little guy. I wanted to use the little roller-blader guy to “Prepare with Care” but he didn’t have a helmet on, so he wasn’t careful. And I like this little guy because, you know, if I’m going to the grocery store and I’ve got my two-and-a-half-year-old latched on, I’m paying attention to her. I’m not paying attention to something that might be hanging on the shelf. This is something she would notice. And say, “Look, Mommy!” **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

I used the little bacteria guy because I’ve got a ten-year-old and it would catch my eye. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

[I used the] bacteria person [to] say “Look out for Mr. Clean soap.” You know, something that the kids [would notice]. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Because I have kids, I just think it needs to be a [...] friendly kind of like when the kids look at this, they think of that; and if they ever have to ask me: What is that, Mom? What kind of creature is that? You know, I can tell them. I feel like kids need to know if the food needs to be safe. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

I feel like the kids need to know how important it is also. And I think... I wanted to do it more or less for kids also by using that bacterial thing. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

The need for visual resonance with the campaign was also demonstrated by participants’ use of the pots from the “Prepare with Care” message. Some participants remarked that the pot should have

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: CREATING NEW MESSAGES

food in or on it. They also felt that a food visual was key to other messages, including “Kitchen Smarts.”

I changed the coloring font in the “Prepare with Care” because it was too much art and I made the font smaller from the USDA, which was too big for this particular one for me. And I just like the “Kitchen Smarts.” **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Moreover, although participants often initially preferred the “Food Safe” or “Kitchen Smarts” messages, they consistently included the “Prepare with Care” message when creating their own.

I would like to see a more flowy, scripty, jazzy, “Prepare with Care,” sort of splashy thing. And then have the “Be Food Safe” sort of down below here, but something that catches your eye, a little more movement. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Below is a sampling of several of the new messages created by participants:

“Kitchen Smarts from USDA...use it or lose it.” **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

“Prepare with Care...Be Food Safe from USDA.” **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

“Use Kitchen Common Sense...Prepare with Care.” **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

“Kitchen Smarts from USDA...Prepare with Care.” **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

“Be Food Safe...Fight BAC! with Kitchen Smarts.” **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

“Be Food Safe...Use Kitchen Smarts from USDA.” **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

“Prepare with Care...Use Kitchen Common Sense.” **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

“Be Food Safe, Use Kitchen Common Sense and Prepare with Care!” **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

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Copy Direction

To help determine potentially effective advertisement tones and language for the campaign, participants reviewed four umbrella messages and sample advertising copy and were asked to provide feedback. As with the other elements used in these focus groups, the order in which they were presented to the groups was rotated so that there was no bias of placement in the discussions.

Many participants said that they often skim copy, and therefore that highlighting, or printing the most interesting point in bold is often a good technique to draw their attention. Participants consistently provided feedback to cut the length of copy direction, often from words or phrases they felt were unnecessary or redundant. However, generally, they felt the copy direction appropriately reflected the message it related to.

Participants most consistently recognized, “Food Safe...Prepare with Care from USDA” and “Prepare with Care...Be Food Safe from USDA,” as the copy that most resonated with them. They indicated that the copy affirmed their skills in the kitchen, and positioned the “Food Safe” concept as one that would help them protect their families, which also appealed to them.

Audiences varied in their opinions of introducing the “three Cs and an S,” the concept as reflected in the copy for “Kitchen Smarts from USDA.” While many liked the message tagline and the use of acronyms, some felt that this attempt at an acronym fell flat. Conversely, some participants said that introducing the concept without further explanation in the copy could alienate the reader.

Participants had some specific comments for each paragraph.

Kitchen Common Sense from USDA

How can you tell a hamburger is done? Is your refrigerator cold enough to keep bacteria from growing? Food safety risks may be more common than you think. It doesn't have to take time to prepare healthy and safe meals for your family...add some easy Kitchen Common Sense from USDA, and great meals will always be safe meals.

We first asked the focus groups to explain what the paragraph was trying to say to them.

I think what they are trying to get across is that it is not too difficult or too long to do it right, and that point is made clear which is good, and it's for your family.

ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM

Well, I'm thinking thermometer and/or refrigerator thermometer. That is the way I am receiving it and what is having to prepare healthy and safe meals have to do. I mean, safe meals I can understand, but the healthy, I mean, I don't know. It's too conflicting, I don't like it. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Yes, it's making you think: God, every time I'm going to eat that hamburger, I want to make sure it's done, you know? **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

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Several participants had suggestions regarding how the paragraph could be rearranged or additions could be made.

You take that sentence it doesn't have to take time, you can move that first or something, then you would understand what you are getting at but you really think because of the first sentences have how can you tell when a hamburger is done, that it's going to be about thermometers or temperatures. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I think I would start the whole thing with Easy Kitchen Common Sense from USDA. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

It doesn't have to take time, you ought to say it doesn't have to take a lot of time. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I think things always go well in threes so I would like to see another question. I would like to take this first thing out, "Kitchen Common Sense," take that out, because you are saying "Kitchen Common Sense," down here. You can have a three bullet point or three questions: How can you tell when a hamburger is properly cooked? Is that what you are saying? Everybody has done something different. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Cut out the first two sentences and then the third one, so I think you really hit the point by saying Food Safety is maybe more common than you think. Add some Easy Kitchen Common Sense from USDA and great meals from all will be safe. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

You can cut out the first two sentences and then the third sentence is really what the first two are trying to say. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

A few simply declared that they did not like this copy.

Too damn long and wordy. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I don't know, I don't like it. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

It's boring. You know, the other one is tasty, fresh. I like stuff like that. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Prepare with Care...Be Food Safe from USDA

Every day your family looks forward to great meals prepared in your own kitchen. You make sure what you serve is tasty and fresh...but how can you be sure it's safe and free from bacteria? Safe food handling is easy to learn and it doesn't have to slow you down. The USDA is your partner in being FoodSafe at home. Prepare with care!

Generally, participants liked this paragraph. They said that this copy made sense and was catchy.

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I like that it says “the USDA is your partner” because it sounds like I am going to get help in places I don’t understand, and that they do understand. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I like [...] that it says it doesn’t slow you down but it doesn’t seem fast; you know, you don’t have images of McDonald’s in your head or images of taking something out of the freezer and popping it in the microwave. You know, it’s not just fast and careless. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

It doesn’t slow you down; it’s good. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Yeah, this is probably the best one. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

It has catchy words. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I like the way it says, “the USDA is your partner in being safe at home,” because it gives you a sense that here’s an authority. They know what needs to be done and it can guide you where you need to be. And they’re trusting you to know how to make food that your family likes; you know, it’s like, that’s your business, you know what your family likes, you do your thing. We’re just here to, you know, saying, you know, to warn you about what’s out there and what you need to do and it’s straight forward. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

It’s just to the point. It actually says everything that you know about the USDA wanting to help you and being food safe and prepare with care and just basically saying everything. I don’t know, maybe it’s just the different words that were used. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Well, it makes good straight forward sense too, but also when you’re using this “Food Safe,” which I hated to start with, it makes a little more sense in this paragraph; and in this “Prepare with Care—Be Food Safe”. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

“Being food safe at home—Prepare with Care.” It just makes good sense. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Some participants had some editing suggestions to make the wording more clear.

I sort of rewrote it a little bit. “Your family will love the great meals you prepare for them.” **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I like that, but what I’d like to see it say, or I’d like to see it changed, is where it says, but how can you be sure it’s safe and free from bacteria? I want that bold, because I’m going to speed read but that’s what I want to see, and that’s going to tell me, okay, that’s what this is about, and that’s important to me. So if they made that bolder and stuck out like a sore thumb. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

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You could say: Use kitchen common sense. Be food safe from the USDA. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Kitchen Smarts from USDA

When you're in your kitchen, you know how to put together the kind of meals your family will love. But do you also know how to mix in safe food handling skills—the three Cs and an S? The USDA wants to help you learn the quick and easy lessons of “Clean, Cook, Chill and Separate” – you can make your own kitchen smarter...and safer!

Several participants seemed to like this one over the others.

This is my favorite headline of all of them. “Kitchen Smarts from USDA,” this is my favorite. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I like that. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

It sort of tells it all. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Starting with “you know how to put together” you are giving me credit. You are giving me credit for the good things that I do, right off the bat, and that makes me a little more open to listening to you. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Others said that this should be phrased as a reminder, not as a new instruction. Also, participants do not want to feel as though the USDA is talking down to them.

What I've seen so far is that the USDA, it looks like they want to impart their venerable knowledge on food handling skills, but it is talking down to us. Saying “Hey, you can cook, but did you know that you have to cook cleaner food, too?” All I need to know is Clean, Cook, Chill, and Separate? That's all I need to know out of all of this? I don't need to read anything else? **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I didn't like it because it says, “I want you to learn a quick and easy lesson”... I mean, it should be easy, but quick and easy just sounds like you're just running in there and doing something real quick and come right back out. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

That looks like a run-on sentence they used to talk about in school, you know, the way it is, and you're right. It needs to be separated and it needs to have a period in there. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I don't need to be told if I need to know something. I can be reminded that there are some things that I don't know, or I can be reminded to do things that I already do know, but

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being told that I need to learn something from a government department does not sit well with me. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Some participants said that the paragraph was too long or sounded wordy.

You can cut out the “when you are in your kitchen” and just say “you know how to put together the kind of meals your family will love, but do you also know how to mix in safe food handling skills? The USDA want to help you learn”. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Many participants commented on the sentence regarding the “three C’s and an S.” They did not find this sentence as catchy as intended.

If you get rid of separate, keep the three C’s. Three C’s is easy to remember, instead of three C’s and an S. If you say three Cs: clean, cook, and chill, that would be it. Three C’s, just like A,B,C. Three C’s. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I’d rather see it say, you know, are you familiar with the three C’s and the S?
ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM

And I would have put the bottom sentence first. You can make your kitchen smarter and safer using the three C’s and the S. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

I actually don’t think it’s very like catchy. Maybe because it’s the way that it’s arranged. [...] I guess I’m so used to hearing all these little songs all day on the Disney Channel or something; but very, you know, like catchy—the three C’s and an S, you know. I think it’s probably just the way it is arranged on here. But the message is a good message.
COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM

The three C’s and the S isn’t working for me. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

“But do you also know how to mix in safe food handling skills” and I’d put the question mark directly after that. “The USDA wants to help you learn the three C’s and an S” and then, “clean, cook, chill and separate” and drop out all that “the quick and easy lessons of.”
COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM

I personally don’t like the three C’s and S. I got the five-S system at work and I hate those acronyms. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Clean what? Your food? Your utensils? Separate what? **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

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FoodSafe...Prepare with Care from USDA

You know where to shop and how to prepare a great meal that will please your family. You know what the kids will eat and your parents will enjoy. But do you know how to be FoodSafe? We'll take you through the fast, simple steps you can take to protect your family from bacteria. The USDA will help you Prepare with Care.

This copy sample received positive feedback in all four focus groups.

Much better than the other ones. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

You don't feel threatened, you just feel like it's good information that they are going to give you that may help you. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

And they start off right away with telling you that "you know this" so it kind of builds you up a little bit. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

It's a little shorter, it's to the point. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Fast and simple steps and from the USDA. Short and to the point. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

I think that was good and it talks about the kids and parents and how much they're going to enjoy the food. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

This reflects back on the fact that I'm a child of the 60s, but I see "the USDA will help you prepare with care..." there's this echo in the back of my head—and I know this isn't going to be true for everybody—but there's something that says, "We are the government and we are here to help you." **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

"The USDA will help you prepare with care." I still think like you said before, it was actually taking some type of authority that we're here to help show you to prepare with care so you can be food safe. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Several participants also provided suggestions about how to improve this paragraph.

Instead of saying "kids and parents," if you just put "everyone" you don't have to put, because, well, I don't have parents at my house, hell, they are dead. I don't have kids at my house anymore; I have grandkids. So, if you put, you know everyone will eat and enjoy. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Well, I think if this was a message I was reading in a magazine or a paper, "Food Safe—Prepare With Care from USDA" needs to be in big, bold letters. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

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I would take the word “fast” out. I just don’t like “fast, quick”. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I think it’s too long. It’s a big piece of ... pardon my French there but ... you know, where it starts at, do you know how to be Food Safe? That’s the first thing that caught my ... everything before that is ... and if I’m browsing and I’m in a hurry or I’m waiting, you know that just to me is a turnoff. I don’t want ... just give me the point, the facts and if it’s got my eye, then it’s got my eye, and if it doesn’t, we’re done. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

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Family Groupings

The next exercise in each group was to show pictures of family groupings to elicit feedback and reactions to images that might appeal to caregiver audiences in an advertising campaign. Each image was discussed and participants noted which aspects of the picture they liked or disliked. Participants were told that these particular images were only for research purposes and were not intended to be the images used for the campaign.

This image portrayed a young girl and what many participants assumed to be her mother preparing something in a pot on the stove. The young girl appears to be stirring the pot while the mother watches her.



Several participants noticed that the woman in the picture seemed to be on the phone.

While she's talking on the phone? **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Is she on the telephone? **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

When you're on the phone, you don't pay attention. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

And it looks like mom is on the phone. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I like the idea of the mother teaching the daughter how to stir the pot, just not on the phone. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Despite the moderator's admonition to concentrate upon the relationship depicted in the picture, many participants appeared to concentrate upon what they perceived to be safety issues portrayed in the photograph.

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The daughter's gotta get her hand off the stove. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I don't think that is very safe. It looks like her sleeve is going to go up on fire.
ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM

I mean, your angle is food safety and safety. That is just not a safe picture.
ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM

Others noticed a teaching relationship between the child and her mom.

The mom and the child, teaching. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

I think that's nice because it's a mother and daughter cooking together. She's showing her how to be safe in the kitchen. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Mom's teaching daughter how to do it right. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

It's a teaching relationship. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Teaching the child how to be Food Safe at an early age. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

One person made a comment that referred to both the perceived safety issue and the relationship between the mother and daughter:

Hand on the hand – even though that hand is awfully close to the side of that pot.
COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM

Other participants simply liked the photo overall.

Just a nice wholesome picture. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

They're very cute together. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

The people are fine. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Another image shown to the groups portrayed a couple preparing a turkey dinner. The woman has her hand on the man's arm while he bastes a turkey.

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In general, this photo was liked, but participants often commented that it reflected one special day, for example, Thanksgiving, and not everyday life.

Thanksgiving. Be careful on that one day—what it says to me. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

That would be a good one for like the holidays just because he is basting something. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Oh, Thanksgiving. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Yea, it's kind of holiday oriented. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

It looks like they either just come from church and they have the family over, or it's probably Thanksgiving or Christmas. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I like this one too, but it probably looks like once a year. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Others indicated that this photo seemed fake (with several women commenting on the unlikelihood of a man wearing a tie while cooking and helping in the kitchen with a smile on his face!).

They're way too happy. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

That's just not real there. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Not a regular occurrence. [...]In the kitchen together. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

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Much too fake. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

He is a little over-dressed. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

In South Carolina, the image of the African-American couple was cause for some pause by participants in one group who appeared to be preoccupied with the ethnicity of the woman and the possibility that the couple was interracial.

Well, I think any time you run into interracial things, you're going to have some people that are going to be [uneasy or pause]. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I mean, it doesn't matter; but I think a lot of people would do the same thing I'm doing and [wonder]. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

The following image portrays an older woman in bed wearing a robe. On her lap she has a tray of food. Another woman appears to be giving the older woman medicine.



Overall, participants expressed very negative reactions to this photo. They said that the photo emphasized the woman's illness rather than a caregiving relationship, and they found this depiction of illness to be very unappealing to them.

Nah, somebody's sick or something. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Sickness. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

That doesn't relay good feelings. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

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I would think of the hospital. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I think that's depressing to me. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

It's a little too realistic. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

They are sick. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

I don't like it at all. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Other participants did not see how this photograph related to food safety.

It doesn't relate to this. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Is she in bed because she cross-contaminated in the kitchen? **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

The whole idea is not to associate sickness with food. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

It doesn't remind me of food period, at all. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Another image shown to the focus groups portrays a middle-aged couple preparing a meal in the kitchen. The man is stirring a pot of what appears to be tomato sauce while the woman is at the counter chopping vegetables.



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Participants generally responded positively this photo. They seemed to think that the couple in the photo was having fun and enjoying their time together. Many felt that the husband and wife photo conveyed warmth and a relationship that was appealing.

I like that. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

They're both in there in the kitchen together. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

It portrays a happy time. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

They're spending time together. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Looks like they're having fun to me. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I think it's good, both of them in the kitchen. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I love the way he has his hand on her shoulder. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

It looks like they're older people have fun in the kitchen. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Maybe they like caring for their whole family or something. I think that one's better.
COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM

It looks like they each have their job and they are touching each other so there is the warmth of love and family, but they are both capable and doing their own job. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

A couple of participants indicated that this photo seemed staged.

It looks like she's been standing in that position too long waiting for them to take the picture. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

It looked more staged than some of these others. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Another photo shown to the focus groups portrays a mother and her toddler-aged daughter. The daughter appears to be rubbing noses with her mom.

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The primary reaction to this picture was that participants did not see how the picture related to food or food safety.

It doesn't convey this concept at all – (unint.) kids standing on the corner where you're getting ready to get your food. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

It doesn't make you think of food at all. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

It's not relevant. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

It doesn't have anything to do with food. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

They're adorable, but it doesn't seem to have any relationship to anything. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Other participants simply described the photo as “cute,” or “like a portrait that should be stuck in the house somewhere.”

Another picture shown to the focus groups was an image from the viewpoint of inside the refrigerator. It shows a young boy standing at the open door putting food in his mouth.

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Many participants made comments regarding the food items in the refrigerator.

I was going to say, usually what we do with grapes is we wash and put them in a basket similar to that and the kids pick at them all day. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

You see healthy food. You see cut vegetables that they can basically like... the cucumbers and the grapes. I think that's a good picture. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

It's just... it's not covered, that's what gets to me. It's not covered up; because if his hands aren't clean and he just reached in and touched those cucumbers and whatnot and then another kid comes along and he is clean and touches them, then he's getting dirty germs off of the previous kid. It's a good message, but I just don't like eating right out of the refrigerator like that. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Milk is open. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

There's juice, there's milk, there's fruit, look at the vegetables. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

And the milk is open. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

They are giving their kids good healthy snack choices. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

He's eating dirty grapes. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Other participants commented upon the fact that this seems to be a realistic scenario for kids. Participants generally agreed that the photo represented the reality of what children often do, and that it was very appealing in that presentation.

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I remember my kids when they were little and they loved to just stand in front of the refrigerator and eat. It's like a natural kid thing to want to do. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

That's what kids do. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Participants also noted that the child in the picture was cute.

It's cute. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

He's a cute kid, I mean, if you just want us to look at the person, yeah, he's a cute kid. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

He's a cutie pie. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Another image shown to the groups depicts an expectant mother and her young daughter. They are sitting at a table in the kitchen with a few orange slices on a plate in front of them. Both the mother and the daughter have their hands on the expectant mother's stomach.



Some participants had difficulty seeing how this photo related to food safety.

What does a woman being pregnant have to do with her preparing food? **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

It has nothing about food safety, nothing. It just shows family. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

I'm not seeing food safety at all. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Other participants said that they liked the photo.

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That'll go over big, I think. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I think it just reminds me of the perfect little family; and they're in the kitchen and they're eating fruit. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

It shows a loving relationship. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

It looks like Mom thinks healthy. Her clothes, the kitchen looks clean. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Again, the people, it's very warm, very loving. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Fuzzy and warm. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Some participants did not like the idea of showing a pregnant lady preparing food in the kitchen.

I don't know, I guess, the [pregnant lady in the] kitchen preparing food. I mean, maybe sitting at a table and eating it, but surely not in the kitchen preparing it. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Just something about the big belly. I don't know, my cousin, she's pregnant and I hate to see her in the kitchen. I don't know why, I just do. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: MEDIA PLACEMENT

Media Placement

Participants were then asked to talk about media outlets, and messages on issues such as food safety and nutrition and where they have heard them before. Further, they were asked to explore what media forms and channels they would expect to see concerning a mass media campaign to educate caregivers on safe food handling practices.

Consistent with feedback from participants on the need to have strong visuals for this campaign, they also indicated that television is the primary media vehicle through which they would like and expect to see advertisements for this campaign.

I think television. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Television. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Television reaches most people. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Through the TV. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Um, on TV – I don't know, maybe in a restaurant. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I would definitely say television. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I was thinking for all those moms that are like maybe on maternity leave or moms that are at-home moms that are home during the day that they take care of the kids and they're watching TV. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Some mentioned that the ads could be shown during specific television shows or on specific channels. They identified morning and evening advertisement placements as the best time to reach them via television. For example, morning shows such as the *Today Show* are watched by many as they prepare for the day. Many participants specifically noted food channels, including the *Food Network*, personalities such as Emeril and Rachael Raye, and public television food shows as other sources of information.

Through the TV, Emeril. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Rachael Raye, Quick Meals. I mean, I look at all of them. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Like during soap opera time, you know, which is from 12:30 to 4? Yeah, 12:30 to 4.
COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM

Maybe on the Food Network. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

I also learned a lot from Public Television and the various, on Saturday afternoon they have a lot of different cooking shows that teach and they do teach you a lot about food safety, food handling, that kind of thing. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: MEDIA PLACEMENT

I like that Food Channel. I'm always looking at it almost all the time. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Just me, we don't have cable or any satellite or anything like that. We just have basic network. So if you're trying to reach somebody on basic network, cute little catchy commercials, because you've only got five channels, you ain't going far and there ain't no point in flipping. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

I have to watch the Today Show, that's all there is to it. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I remember after the beef thing with Oprah, they had quite a bit of a specials, like on 20/20. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

Maybe on the Food Network, but I wouldn't necessarily want to see it on HBO or any of those. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Others suggested that the campaign should run during the news broadcast. Participants identified local news programs and national newsmagazine shows such as *20/20* and *Dateline NBC*, as outlets to which they look for educational information.

Like the news, for instance, just like when you get... when they talk about who got an "A" in this restaurant, who got a "C," they should maybe put that comment into an ad or something on the news. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Incorporate it into a news broadcast. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I watch the news to see what the weather (unint.) at 6 o'clock in the morning. So maybe on the news early in the morning; and a lot of parents who work to come home and prepare meals, they'll catch it then because we really can't watch TV from 9 on to 5 if you're at work or at school or whatever. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Several participants mentioned magazines as the primary medium in which they would expect to see such a campaign. Participants identified magazines such as *Reader's Digest*, *Family Circle*, *Good Housekeeping*, and food publications including *Cooking Light* as print outlets where they would expect to see advertisements. Moreover, they suggested targeted approaches to various audiences; for example, full-page ads in the sports and food sections of major newspapers that would reach the general male population and food preparers, respectively.

Also in like the *Parenting* magazine or like the *Highlights* because kids [read] a lot of those... kids do get a lot of the Highlights magazines; and that way if they saw one of those little critters and they say, "Ooh mom, look. Look what came in my magazine." **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Cooking magazines. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Magazines. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: MEDIA PLACEMENT

It ought to be in *Good Housekeeping* or something like that. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Cooking Light. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

A parenting magazine. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

I get three or four food magazines. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

But I ... pick up a magazine, *Good Housekeeping*, any of those, that should be, you know, a major, you know, big, big ad for like in the newspapers, when the day ... there's one day of the week that they come out with foodstuff, and there are things in there about food preparation. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

A magazine. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Prevention Magazine would be a good magazine. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

Reader's Digest. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

A few participants indicated that they expect to hear ads for this campaign on the radio, although they said that that the ads would have to be “spiced up” if broadcast over the radio.

You know, you'd need to spice it up if it were on a radio big time. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 8 PM**

I was going to say I know from when I get up early in the morning for my son to get him ready for school, so either on the radio or on... **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Participants mentioned that they look to the Web and various links for this type of information. They also stated that they would expect young housewives to look to the Internet, as well.

A lot of young housewives go to the Internet, too, and especially, if you can hook this up, a link from an interesting site that a young housewife is going to versus they're looking for a particular menu of recipes, you know? Throw it in on the Internet somewhere. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

It'd be an actual link to the USDA site; or there might be somewhere you can put something about the USDA that would prompt me to go look at it, because I do look at things like that myself. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Others suggested that brochures or pamphlets should be placed in the aisles of grocery stores, in the fliers that grocery stores distribute, or even on the packaging of particular items. Doctor's offices were also mentioned as places where participants would be likely to read such information.

SECTION 3: FINDINGS: MEDIA PLACEMENT

Well, a lot of food problems are going to cause stomach irritations, stuff like that, so doctors' offices, medicine aisle, and like where Pepto is and stuff like that is. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 8 PM**

Maybe on a package of wheat. **COLUMBIA – 5-17-05 – 6 PM**

Grocery store. **ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM**

The ads that they send out once a week for all of the different grocery stores.
ALBUQUERQUE – 3-15-05 – 6 PM

Most participants struggled to identify a food safety campaign they had seen previously. Currently, many participants receive safe food preparation tips from food packaging, kitchen product labeling, and cookbooks.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSIONS AND COMMON THEMES

CONCLUSIONS AND COMMON THEMES

In this section, ORC Macro has synthesized the findings of the four focus groups study into a set of general themes. Identifying these common themes will be the data from which to design an effective mass media campaign. This analysis will provide USDA with additional insight into the views of caregivers regarding media design and placement.

While this summary may characterize some issues pertaining to caregivers in general, the conclusions should not be overly generalized or projected outward to all caregivers.

Color selection of creative elements is an important decision.

Participants generally liked the color blue--Throughout the discussion of colors and images, participants were continually drawn to images and treatments that contained blue. Participants claimed that the blue treatments were “mellow,” easier to read, stand out more, and were generally more appealing. This finding was general across all treatments that contained blue. Even participants who didn’t care for the words preferred the blue color.

Red was described as an alarming color and signified “warning”--Although red seemed to be a color liked by many participants, it was not a color they would find appealing in a food safety campaign. Many participants found the color red to be a warning or to be alarming or aggressive. Some even went so far as to say that it signified blood—again, not very appealing for a food safety campaign. The alarmist nature of red treatments was perceived as “too much” for many participants. For this campaign, it is not necessary to avoid red all together. Red should not however, be the dominant color of the treatment or ad. Participants seemed welcome to the idea of combining red with another color such as blue or white.

Colors should contrast and complement each other--Participants tended to choose treatments that were easy to read. One of the factors that made one treatment easier to read than another was the contrast. Participants generally did not like treatments that combined similar colors or light colors. They liked contrast or clear definition among words and images. For some treatments, participants suggested adding a shadow or border in order to give the image more definition.

Messages and images need context and clarity to be fully understood.

Many participants indicated that “BAC!” might be confusing, especially if there is not enough context to help with the interpretation. Several participants were initially confused with the shortened word. If “BAC!” is to be used in a media campaign, it is important to ensure that viewers have the context necessary to understand its meaning. Other treatments were also not fully clear to participants. Participants indicated that the “Food Safe...Fight BAC!” ad, “doesn’t make you aware exactly what you’re saying.” The Kitchen Common Sense cutting board and meat thermometer were also misinterpreted by participants. Some suggested including fresh vegetables near the cutting board, or having the thermometer in a turkey in order to better indicate what the illustrations are depicting.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSIONS AND COMMON THEMES

Messages need to be short and catchy.

Participants were attracted to phrases that were catchy. This was true for both treatments and copy. Often, participants stated clearly that some messages were not “catchy” enough. Participants indicated that the green “BAC” character was catchy, but more so to kids.

Phrases used in a media campaign should also be concise and to the point. Participants liked phrases that were shorter. In discussing various phrases, participants suggested shortening phrases that they thought were too long.

Participants don’t want to be insulted or be told what they already know.

Participants continually suggested that they do not want messages that will “talk down” to them or provide them with information that should reflect common sense. On the contrary, participants liked phrases or messages that didn’t make them “feel stupid” and were “non-offensive.”

It is generally good to include “USDA” somewhere in the ad.

Although it is not necessary for “USDA” to be a predominant part of any message, it is important for it to be included. Participants seem to trust and respect the USDA, and they claim that adding “from USDA” to a message adds authority and credibility. Participants even equated the USDA labeling to the Good Housekeeping *Seal of Approval*, a widely recognized endorsement. Participants mentioned that they might pick up a brochure *because* it was from the USDA.

Participants generally liked treatments that were easy to read.

Participants tended to like images that they could clearly see and read. They did not like treatments or fonts that they would have to get close to in order to read. Darker colors or colors that contrast were favored among participants. In the “Prepare with Care” treatment, participants did not particularly care for the “blue and orange” colors because they were “difficult to read.”

Conversely, participants liked treatments that included large lettering. They liked how the reader didn’t have to be “right up against them to see them.”

Advertisement copy should be concise, yet fully communicate the intended message.

Participants remarked that they may skim copy and that noting words or phrases that are key, or particularly stand out, is a good way to get their attention. They are not as likely to read lengthy copy, even if it is accompanied by an appealing visual. As an indication of this, participants throughout the groups repeatedly cut the length of the sample copy direction. However, participants also indicate that copy should not be so short that that message, or call to action, is unclear. They want to walk away from the message knowing what they are supposed to do.

Photos of people in natural, everyday situations received the most positive feedback.

Participants indicated that some of the family groupings shown to them seemed staged and that the people in the photos look like they have been standing in their positions too long. They also did not like photos that seemed to relate only to holidays or to “once a year” situations. They welcomed

SECTION 4: CONCLUSIONS AND COMMON THEMES

photos that were “regular occurrences” and seemed more year-round. Receiving the most positive feedback was the image of the boy eating grapes out of the fridge. Most participants could relate directly to this photo.

Participants were immediately turned off by photos that related to illness or hospitals, as this seemed too realistic and depressing. Participants did not like photos that “didn’t have anything to do with food.”

Participants indicated that television should be the primary medium for a food campaign.

Participants stated that “television reaches the most people.” This is where participants expect to see a food related ad. In addition, participants has several suggestions regarding when to run such an ad—during a soap opera, during the news (both morning and evening news), during cooking shows, etc. It was mentioned however, that not everyone has cable or satellite television, suggesting that broadcast and/or public television might be the way to go.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT SCREENER

Participant Screener for USDA Consumer Focus Groups March 2005

Recruiting Goals

- Two groups in each location [Please see table below for specifications at your location.]

In each location the criteria are the following:

- Each group will consist of adults both 2 males and 3 females.
- Each group will have a mix of race/ethnicity reflective of the population in the area.
- Each group will have a mix of caregivers of children under age 10 and/or adults over age 60.
- All participants must be able to read, understand, and speak English.
- Recruit for two hours with the expectation that the groups will last an hour and a half.
- 6 to 7 recruits per group in order to get 5 to participate.
- Participants will receive a stipend for their time (Columbia, SC \$60 and Albuquerque, NM \$65).

Table 1: Focus Group Specifications

Location	Date	Times	Participants
Albuquerque, NM	3/15/2005	Group 1: 6:00 to 7:30 Group 2: 8:00 to 9:30	Group 1: Adult Caregiver Group 2: Adult Caregiver
Columbus, SC	3/17/2005	Group 1: 6:00 to 7:30 Group 2: 8:00 to 9:30	Group 1: Adult Caregiver Group 2: Adult Caregiver

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT SCREENER

Participant Screener for Focus Groups

Hello Mr./Ms. _____, my name is _____ and I'm calling about a research study that we are doing in your area. We are recruiting for an upcoming focus group we will be conducting among caregivers of children under the age of 10 and adults over the age of 60.

Would you mind answering a few questions?

Screening Questions

Q1. Are there any food service or grocery industry workers in your household?

- Yes -> [Thank the person for his/her time]
- No -> continue

Q2. Are you a state or federal government employee?

- Yes -> [Thank the person for his/her time]
- No -> continue

Q3. Are you a university employee such as a researcher or working for a cooperative extension?

- Yes -> [Thank the person for his/her time]
- No -> continue

Q4. Do you prepare at least three meals a week for any children under the age of 10 or adults over the age of 60 in the household?

- No → eliminate [thank respondent politely]
- Yes → continue

[Note: A food preparer is someone who regularly prepares meals or cooks food for other individuals. If a respondent is the food preparer for children under the age of 10 and/or adults over the age of 60, then the respondent can be invited to participate.]

Q5. Clean

How often do you wash your hands after cracking open an egg?

- Never → continue (0 pts)
- Sometimes → continue (1 pt)
- Most of the time → continue (1 pt)
- Always → continue (1 pt)

Q6. Separate

How often do you use a different cutting board for raw meats and other foods for the same meal or wash the cutting board between cutting raw meats and other foods?

- Never → continue (0 pts)
- Sometimes → continue (1 pt)
- Most of the time → continue (1 pt)
- Always → continue (1 pt)

Q7. Cook

Do you own a food thermometer?

- Yes → continue (1 pt)
- No → continue (0 pts)

Q8. Chill

How often do you defrost meat/poultry at room temperature?

- Never → continue (1 pt)
- Sometimes → continue (1 pt)
- Most of the time → continue (0 pts)
- Always → continue (0 pts)

Total Points:

- 2 or more points → continue
- 0 or 1 points → eliminate

Q9. In the past year, have you participated in any focus groups or other market research studies? [**Participation in telephone surveys is allowable**]

- Yes -> [Thank the person for his/her time]
- No -> continue

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT SCREENER

We would like to invite you to participate in a focus group in which you will be asked to discuss your attitudes towards a variety of test messages and advertisement images. The focus group is being conducted on behalf of the United States Department of Agriculture, or USDA, not by a commercial business. The purpose is not to sell you anything, but to learn more about how you react to certain messages and images.

The discussion will last approximately 90 minutes, and will include between 4 to 5 adults. Your participation and everything you say during the discussion will remain confidential. In appreciation for your time, you will receive (Columbia, SC **\$60.00** and Albuquerque, NM **\$65.00**) in cash. We will provide [insert type of food served] for you before the focus group begins.

The focus group will be held on [refer to table below for the date and time]. It will be held in [location].

Q10. Do you think that you will be able to participate?

- Yes -> continue
- No -> [Thank the person for his/her time]

I'm glad that you will be able to join us!

Demographic Questions

Q11. We would like to make sure that the participants in the focus group are racially and ethnically representative. What is your ethnic background?

- White, not Hispanic or Latino Origin
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other [Specify] _____
- Refused

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT SCREENER

I would like to send you a confirmation letter and directions to the facility. In order to do so, could you please tell me your mailing address (or fax number) and a phone number where you can be reached:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Date of focus group: _____ Time: _____

We are only inviting a few people, so it is very important that you notify us as soon as possible if for some reason you are unable to attend. Please call [recruiter] at [telephone number] if this should happen. We look forward to seeing you on [date] at [time].

USDA Multi-Year Mass Media Campaign Plan

Focus Group Moderator's Guide

MARCH 2005

I. Welcome/Introduction

Welcome and thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this focus group. My name is _____, and my role is to guide the discussion tonight. Right away, I want to let everyone know that I'm not an expert in the topic we'll be covering. I want to hear your honest opinions about the topics we discuss tonight. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions I'm going to ask, please just relax and enjoy the discussion.

Before we get started, there are just a few things I'd like to point out. As you may have noticed, there is a one-way mirror in this room. Behind the mirror are staff from my company, ORC Macro, who are observing and taking notes. [*Also observing is staff from our client for this project.*]

If for any reason you wish to leave the discussion, you may. You will still receive your incentive for your willingness to participate.

Ground Rules

- A. You have been asked here to offer your views and opinions; participation from everyone is important.
- B. Audio and video taping the session.
- C. Speak one at a time.
- D. No side conversations.
- E. It is OK to disagree with each other, because there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. If you dislike something or disagree with something that is said, I want to hear about it.
- F. Use first names only when speaking.
- G. All answers are confidential, so feel free to speak your mind.

Ice Breaker

Let's begin by finding out a little bit about each of you. Please tell everyone your first name, and also tell us what type of meal you have the most fun preparing.

II. Topic 1 - General Food Safety Discussion

I'd like to start by having everyone think about how they generally prepare foods for dinner.

- What is important to remember when preparing a meal?
- How do you generally learn about safe food preparation?

We're here this evening because my client wants to reach people like you with important messages about how to more safely practice food handling behaviors. So tonight, I'd like to get your feedback on communications concepts, images, and vehicles to help inform a new communications campaign they are developing.

III. Topic 2 – Conceptual Message Testing

Messages

I'd like us to focus on a few conceptual messages. I have a few examples that I would like to show you and we will discuss each.

[Show each conceptual message individually (in black and white).]

- “FoodSafe”
- “Kitchen Common Sense”
- “KitchenSmarts”
- “Prepare with Care”
- “Fight BAC!”
- “FoodSafe...Fight BAC!”

What do you think about this phrase?

- What do you think this means?
- What is clear/unclear about this phrase?
- What visuals come to mind?

[Repeat these questions for each of the six messages.]

Now taking a look at all six messages together,

- Which of these phrases appeals to you the most?
- Why do you like/dislike one (or two) more than others?

Colors and Images

Now I want to switch gears a bit. We have been discussing the language and words that are used to form messages, but now I want to talk with you about the colors and images that might be used.

APPENDIX B: MODERATOR'S GUIDE

I am going to show you a few examples of the messages we just discussed in a more developed form. Again, during this discussion, I don't want you to discuss the wording and language, but rather the visual imagery such as the colors, the graphics, the layout, and other physical appearance aspects of the message.

[Show the six color boards simultaneously.]

How important is the visual imagery (such as the pots, pans, thermometers, cutting board, etc.)?

- How do these images affect your reaction to the concept?
- How do the images compare to others that have the same message?
- Which designs best/least convey the messages and why?
- Which designs make you want to know more?

How do the colors affect your perception?

- Which colors most resonate with you? Why?
- Which colors do you like/dislike the most?
- How about the red, white, and blue one – is this important for a government campaign?

USDA Labeling

Some of the messages we just discussed have been taken to the next stage of development and include an endorsement from the USDA.

[Show a color concept that illustrates a message with the USDA label and without the label.]

How does the USDA endorsement affect your perception of the concept?

[Moderator- looking for whether adding USDA makes the message more believable/credible or actionable.]

- What does the USDA label mean to you?
- Is it better with or without the USDA label? Why?
- What value does the USDA label add?
- Why might it be better to include the USDA label?
- Why might it be better not to include the USDA label?

Creating New Messages

Imagine it was your job to create a new message. I want everyone to use the materials provided to create a message that promotes safe food handling behaviors. You can use the materials provided however you like and can arrange your message however you like. If you need to add something that is not available in the materials you may do so, but try to stick to the materials we have here for you.

[Provide markers and cut-outs of words.]

If a new message is formed:

Tell me about your message.

- Why did you use those words and phrases when forming a new message?
- What is the point of the new message?
- Why is your message arranged the way it is?
- Why will this message have an impact on people?
- What will make people remember this message?

If group struggles with forming a new message:

Why are you having trouble?

- What words or phrases would you use in the new message? Why?
- How did you decide what words or phrases to include in the new message?

IV. Topic 3 – Copy Direction

Now I have a few examples of advertisement copy that I would like to get your reactions to.

[Show USDA copy one at a time.]

What do you think about this message?

- What message is this trying to get across to the reader?
- How clear is the message?
- How well does the title fit the subsequent message?
- What part of this message affects you most? Why?
- How important is it that the message mentions the USDA?

[Moderator – looking for responses that indicate a message is “actionable.”]

How does this relate to you and your lifestyle?

- What part of the message can you relate with most?
- What would you do after reading this message?
- Are there particular words that would drive that change?

How would you paraphrase this message?

[Moderator: probe any responses that indicate the placement of blame on the consumer.]

How would you improve this copy?

- What don't you like about the message?

[Moderator – provide participants with copy materials to add to their message.]

Now I'd like everyone to choose copy to add to their messages.

- Why did you choose that copy?
- What does this add to your message?

V. Topic 4 – Family Groupings

Now I'd like to get your reactions to some images of people.

[Show family groupings one at a time.]

How would you describe these people?

- What do all of the people portrayed here have in common? Is there a common link?
- Who do you feel you can relate with? Why?

What do these people do outside of this picture?

Do these people look like caregivers? Why/why not?

[If applicable: explain the caregiver concept.]

VI. Placement

Everyday we see and hear advertising of all kinds in different types of media -- television, radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards and the Internet. Now that we have discussed the different elements of an advertisement, I'd like to discuss where these messages would best reach you.

Where would you expect to see the ad you have created?

- If we wanted to reach you personally with a message about food safety, what would be the best type of media to communicate with you?
- Why would this be the best place to advertise?

[Moderator: probe for specific vehicles within media types -- what kind of television show/magazine/radio station?]

Do you remember seeing or hearing other advertising about food safety? Where?

What media outlet do you go to for food safety information?

[If not applicable: probe for general food/nutrition information outlets.]

False close

Thank you very much for coming tonight, and for sharing your ideas with us—we really appreciate your time.

USDA Multi-Year Mass Media Campaign Plan

Focus Group Moderator's Guide

MARCH 2005

I. Welcome/Introduction

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Before we get started, there are just a few things I'd like to point out. As you may have noticed, there is a one-way mirror in this room. Behind the mirror are staff from my company, ORC Macro, who are observing and taking notes. [*Also observing is staff from our client for this project.*]

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- M. Use first names only when speaking.
- N. All answers are confidential, so feel free to speak your mind.

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Let's begin by finding out a little bit about each of you. Please tell everyone your first name, and also tell us what type of meal you have the most fun preparing.

II. Topic 1 - General Food Safety Discussion

I'd like to start by having everyone think about how they generally prepare foods for dinner.

- What is your favorite meal to prepare?
- How do you generally learn about safe food preparation?

We're here this evening because my client wants to reach caregivers—people like you prepare food for others—with important messages about how to more safely practice food handling behaviors. So tonight, I'd like to get your feedback on communications concepts, images, and vehicles to help inform a new communications campaign they are developing.

III. Topic 2 – Conceptual Message Testing

Messages

I'd like us to focus on a few communications messages. I have a few examples that I would like to show you and we will discuss each.

[Show each conceptual message individually (in black and white).]

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- “Kitchen Common Sense”
- “KitchenSmarts”
- “Prepare with Care”
- “Fight BAC!”
- “FoodSafe...Fight BAC!”

What do you think about this phrase?

- What does this mean to you?
- What is clear/unclear about this phrase?
- Are there any visuals that come to mind?

[Repeat these questions for each of the six messages.]

Now taking a look at all six messages together,

- Why do you like/dislike one (or two) more than others?

Colors and Images

Now I want to switch gears a bit. We have been discussing the language and words that are used to form messages, but now I want to talk with you about the colors and images that might be used.

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[Show the six color boards simultaneously.]

How important is the visual imagery (such as the pots, pans, thermometers, cutting board, etc.)?

- How do these images affect your reaction to the concept?
- How do the images compare to others that have the same message?
- Which designs best/least convey the messages and why?
- Which designs make you want to know more?

How do the colors affect your perception?

- Which colors most resonate with you? Why?
- Which colors do you like/dislike the most?

USDA Labeling

Some of the messages we just discussed have been taken to the next stage of development and include an endorsement from the USDA.

[Show a color concept that illustrates a message with the USDA label and without the label.]

How does the USDA endorsement affect your perception of the concept?

[Moderator- looking for whether adding USDA makes the message more believable/credible or actionable.]

- Is it better with or without the USDA label? Why?

Creating New Messages

Imagine it was your job to create a new message. I want everyone to use the materials provided to create a message that promotes safe food handling behaviors. You can use the materials provided however you like and can arrange your message however you like. If you need to add something that is not available in the materials you may do so, but try to stick to the materials we have here for you.

[Provide markers and cut-outs of words.]

If a new message is formed:

Tell me about your message.

- Why did you use those words and phrases when forming a new message?
- Why is your message arranged the way it is?
- Why will this message have an impact on people?

IV. Topic 3 – Copy Direction

I have a few examples of advertisement copy that I would like to get your reactions to.

[Show USDA copy one at a time.]

What do you think about this message?

- How clear is the message?
- How well does the title fit the subsequent message? Would another fit better?
- What part of this message affects you most? Why?

How does this relate to you and your lifestyle?

- What part of the message can you relate with most?
- Are there particular words that have impact with you, and why?

[Moderator: probe any responses that indicate the placement of blame on the consumer.]

How would you improve this copy?

- What don't you like about the message?

[Moderator – provide participants with copy materials to add to their message.]

Now I'd like everyone to choose copy to add to their messages.

- Why did you choose that copy?
- What does this add to your message?

V. Topic 4 – Family Groupings

Now I'd like to get your reactions to some images of people.

[Show family groupings one at a time.]

How would you describe these people?

- What is your visceral and/or emotional reaction from the images portrayed?
- Who do you feel you can relate with? Why?

Do these people look like caregivers? Why/why not?

VI. Placement

Everyday we see and hear advertising of all kinds in different types of media -- television, radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards and the Internet. Now that we have discussed the different elements of an advertisement, I'd like to discuss where these messages would best reach you.

Where would you expect to see the ad you have created?

- Where would you expect to see the advertising messages we discussed?
- If we wanted to reach you personally with a message about food safety, what would be the best type of media to communicate with you?

[Moderator: probe for specific vehicles within media types -- what kind of television show/magazine/radio station?]

Do you remember seeing or hearing other advertising about food safety? Where?

[If not applicable: probe for general food/nutrition information outlets.]

False close

Thank you very much for coming tonight, and for sharing your ideas with us—we really appreciate your time.

APPENDIX C: "BAC" CHARACTER TREATMENTS

