

EX®: HELPING SMOKERS RE-LEARN LIFE WITHOUT CIGARETTES

Overview

- **EX** is a comprehensive national campaign that provides free resources designed to help smokers create their own plan to quit smoking.
- **EX** encourages smokers to approach quitting smoking by “re-learning life without cigarettes.” **EX** provides smokers with information that can help them prepare for a quit attempt by:
 1. “Re-learning” their thinking on the behavioral aspects of smoking and how different smoking triggers can be overcome with practice and preparation;
 2. “Re-learning” their knowledge of addiction and how medications can increase their chances for quitting success; and
 3. “Re-learning” their ideas of how support from friends and family members can play a critical role in quitting.
- **EX** helps smokers understand when and why they smoke each cigarette, so that they can break down their quit attempt into manageable pieces. As part of the preparation for quitting smoking, **EX** teaches smokers how to break the “glue” that holds each cigarette to its “trigger,” so when they do actually stop smoking, they will be better prepared and more confident in their ability to quit successfully.
- In 2000, 70 percent of smokers said that they wanted to quit, but only about five percent were successful long-term— a fact that shows that while smokers may know *why* they should quit, they just don’t know *how*.
- **EX** offers action-oriented information on how to quit successfully using proven methods. It was created by the American Legacy Foundation®, a national independent public health foundation dedicated both to preventing youth from smoking and providing resources to help smokers quit, with input from tobacco treatment experts at the world-renowned Mayo Clinic and input from state partners.
- **EX** is presented by the National Alliance for Tobacco Cessation, a collaboration of several national organizations and state public health programs.

Web Resources

All national advertising drives smokers to BecomeAnEX.org, where they can create a plan to “re-learn life without cigarettes.” The site contains the latest news and information in text and videos, as well as action-oriented content organized in the following sections:

- **“Re-learn Habit”** – In addition to being an addiction, the act of smoking includes a number of behavioral components that can greatly increase the difficulty of quitting. All smokers have “triggers,” which are activities, things, or feelings that make them want to smoke. **EX** teaches smokers how to recognize and overcome their triggers as part of the preparation *before* a quit attempt. That way, they are better prepared to deal with their triggers when they do actually stop smoking.
- **“Re-learn Addiction”** -- Many smokers do not fully understand the addictive nature of nicotine, and how prolonged use of cigarettes has actually altered their bodies to make it more difficult for them to quit. **EX** provides details from the experts at Mayo Clinic on the physical aspects of addiction and how various types of medication can greatly increase smokers’ chances for quitting successfully. Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), such as the nicotine patch, gum and lozenge, or FDA-approved, non-nicotine prescription drugs can ease nicotine withdrawal and help smokers deal with their cravings. However, many smokers falsely believe some of these types of medications contribute to nicotine addiction. **EX** debunks the myths associated with quit-smoking medications and walks smokers through the detailed steps it takes to break nicotine addiction.
- **“Re-learn Support”** -- Family members, friends and co-workers can offer support that makes a difference when smokers are trying to quit. **EX** provides smokers with information on how to engage these people for help – even if it’s just asking for some space. The **EX** website will also allow users to connect with other smokers in an online community.

Advertising

- Because “re-learning life without cigarettes” involves taking stock of your smoking behavior to learn when and why you smoke, the goal of the advertising strategy is to be present at times and places the smoker is engaged in self-reflection and/or thinking about having a cigarette. This means they will be more receptive to **EX** messaging.
- **EX** is unique in that it speaks to the smoker from the perspective of a former smoker—an **EX** -smoker—from someone who's been in their situation and understands the issues.
- **EX** is real and straightforward and acknowledges that there are no “magic bullet” cures for quitting, but with preparation and a plan, it is possible.
- **EX** advertising shows smokers that it's possible to re-learn life without cigarettes. Each ad shows a smoker re-learning how to deal with a smoking trigger – a cup of coffee, driving, or even just starting the day – without a cigarette. They show that success in one area can be a building block for success in another.
- The **EX** campaign will include TV, radio, online and out of home advertising. The ads will drive smokers to the **BecomeAnEx.org** Web site, where they can find more action-oriented tools and information to help them quit, while having a virtual support group to help address challenges.
- Creative for **EX** was produced by Austin, Texas-based **GSD&M/Idea City**, the American Legacy Foundation's agency of record for its smoking cessation advertising. Media planning and buying was implemented by **PHD**.

Test Markets

EX was piloted in four major cities in 2006-2007, which were selected based on various criteria, including region of the country, adult smoking rates and ability to reach priority populations – groups that are disproportionately affected by tobacco-related diseases or targeted by tobacco-industry marketing efforts. Smokers were highly receptive to the **EX** voice – evaluation results showed that smokers found it to be trust-worthy and that it encouraged them to think about quitting in a new way. In addition, there were statistically significant changes in some key attitudes related to **EX** messaging among those who were aware of the **EX** campaign.

Pilot markets were:

- **Buffalo, New York**
- **San Antonio, Texas**
- **Grand Rapids, Michigan**
- **Baltimore, Maryland**