

To: Interested Parties

From: Made to Save & Fellow Americans

Re: Vaccine Creative - Testing Insights

Date: August 10, 2021

Overview

Addressing vaccine deliberation in communities of color and Americans under 30 to get the vaccine requires a complex persuasion effort. Made to Save and its partners on the ground have mounted an exhaustive campaign to solve questions of awareness and access. Our first round of creative content in this partnership explored several ways of making the case to get vaccinated and encourage unvaccinated audiences – especially people of color (POC) and people under 30 (Under 30s) – to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccines.

Importantly, as this first round of creative was produced, the landscape started to evolve dramatically. Daily vaccination rates began to wane, and supply started to outpace demand – underscoring the importance of finding what works (and what doesn't) in communicating with holdouts.

We tested nine videos in total – six produced for this project by Fellow Americans and three produced by Made to Save and/or its partner organizations. (See the appendix for links to all videos). Our testing found that moving our target audiences in large numbers on vaccination intent is difficult, but not impossible. The difficulty of success makes understanding what works that much more important.

Methodology

Using the Swayable platform, we performed a randomized controlled trial through a robust, high-sample survey design. One control group was shown no video, while several treatment groups were each shown one video only, then every group was asked the same battery of questions. Each group was sampled and weighted to be representative and comparable across groups. The reported results are deltas relative to a control – in other words, the differences in responses that we measured, which can be directly attributable to having just seen the video. We had 13,857 total responses (with a combined sample size of 12,607) across two tests with one survey design, including an oversampling of younger people and people of color.

Our primary metric of success is **vaccination intent** (e.g., likelihood of getting the COVID vaccine and sentiment on effectiveness). We also looked at secondary metrics like **COVID behavior** (e.g., agreement with sentiment that individuals have an important role to play in stopping spread of COVID and likelihood of practicing social distancing, etc.), **social trust** (e.g., trust in other people), **institutional trust** (e.g.,

confidence in democratic institutions), and **individual change** (e.g., the belief that an individual can effect change in society).

While we looked at performance among all unvaccinated Americans, our key audiences are **unvaccinated Americans among people of color** (“POC”) (which we also broke down among Asian, Black, and Latinx audiences), as well as **unvaccinated Americans under 30** (“Under 30s”).

Toplines

- **Two creative treatments meaningfully moved the needle across key audiences.**

Two videos saw statistically significant movement on vaccination intent among all unvaccinated respondents — [Carla Brown’s Story](#) (+5.6%) and [Desus & Mero](#) (+3.7%). Drilling down into this audience, that positive movement held or improved (Carla saw 5.3% increase among Under 30s and 4.7% among POC; D&M: +4.1% among Under 30s; +4.9% among POC).

These videos vary widely in terms of approach: Carla Brown told the tragic story of losing her husband to COVID and being on a mission, as a nurse, to get other people vaccinated. The emotional intensity and the health care validator both seem to be likely contributors to this performance. Desus & Mero, on the other hand, approach the subject in a light-hearted, quick-paced informational PSA. It doesn’t require familiarity with their voices to be persuasive, but one suspects it’s even more effective among their fans. In fact, it was the strongest performer among unvaccinated people of color (+4.9%). Interestingly, on the metric of social trust, we saw a backlash effect (-2.1%) among all unvaccinated Americans and an even higher backlash effect (-2.5%) among POC, perhaps due to the style of the video.

- **Other videos generated broader positive movement, but with varied results among key audiences.**

Two other videos saw positive directional movement on the Vaccination Intent question among unvaccinated audiences: [Multigenerational Family](#) (+1.0%) and [Saved by Science](#) (+1.1%). Both performed even stronger among POC (MF,



+1.3%; SbS, +1.2%) but less convincingly among Under 30s (MF, +0.4%; SbS, +0.5%).

Multigenerational Family features a Latinx family in which a son helps his mother find out how to get vaccinated. On top of the lift on Vaccination Intent, it saw a statistically significant 1.3% increase in COVID behavior among unvaccinated audiences. **Saved by Science** gave an animated treatment to a testimonial about the COVID vaccine's place in the long line of historic scientific feats. Notably, this saw a backlash effect on the metric of COVID behavior among both Under 30s (-1.2%) and POC (-1.5%), the latter of which was statistically significant.

- **Results among POC segments sometimes differed from broader POC performance.**

For the ease of broader testing conclusions, POC groups were analyzed together and individually. Although we sometimes saw positive movement among *all* POC groups on certain metrics, ([Carla Brown's Story](#) or [I Didn't Think It Was Serious](#)), we saw several examples of variance among different POC segments.

For instance, while [Multigenerational Family](#) performed well on the metrics of Vaccination Intent and COVID Behavior across the board on POC segments, it performed especially well among Asian Under 30s (+3.2%) but barely moved the needle among Black (+0.4%) or Latinx (+0.9%) in the Under 30 category. Additionally, **I Didn't Think It Was Serious** had flat-to-negative movement on vaccination intent among the broader unvaccinated POC and Under 30s audiences, but a positive directional performance among Black viewers (+1.2%) and Under 30s Black viewers (+0.7%) — likely due to the subject of the video being a young Black woman.

- **Compelling stories may not be effective if they feel unrelatable.**

[Native American Clinician](#) performed negatively across the board, seeing negative movement on vaccination intent among the unvaccinated broadly (-1.8%), but especially among Under 30s (-2.4%). This video, which features a Native American health care professional talking about how life is getting back to normal thanks to the vaccine, likely felt distant to the broader unvaccinated audience, almost as if it was an advertisement only for Native audiences. While health care professionals have been some of the most effective messengers during COVID, the relatability hurdle likely proved too powerful to



overcome in this case.

- **COVID seems to be an issue that depresses an individual's sense of personal impact.**

While not one of our key metrics, we tracked these videos' effect on Individual Change (e.g., the belief that an individual can help make change in society). Not one video had statistically significant positive movement on this metric, and several had negative effects, perhaps because a global pandemic dwarfs one's sense of personal impact. The fact that people feel so powerless to move the needle might be worth attempting to address in further creative testing.

- **High-production value does not seem to deliver persuasiveness.**

Consistent with findings from 2020 across topics that showed higher production value often did not boost effectiveness and occasionally increased skepticism among target audiences, we found no meaningful difference grouped by production quality of the creative we tested.

Recommendations & Next Steps for Further Exploration

Since we launched this partnership, the urgency of the mission to get Americans vaccinated has risen dramatically as the landscape around COVID has shifted. There's now plenty of news coverage about unvaccinated people getting sick and having serious regrets of not getting vaccinated – and thousands of deaths that can be avoided.

The lack of clear results in a nine-video panel reiterates the challenges here, and how much more value may be wrung from another one or two rounds, even if we are simply testing existing creative.

With that in mind, here are some suggested next steps from the Fellow Americans and Made to Save teams:

- [Carla Brown's Story](#) was a very strong performer and should be distributed far and wide among our key audiences. To that end, we should further explore more health care validators as well as emotionally resonant personal stories.



- Likewise, [Desus & Mero](#) is worthy of wide distribution, and a particular saturation level among communities of color, with the caveat that it could have a slight deleterious effect on social trust among unvaccinated Americans. It's worth further leaning into trusted messengers among our key audiences, as well as mixing up the approach. It remains to be seen whether changing the tone or approach could increase effectiveness or reduce any backlash effect.
- It seems safe to distribute widely [Multigenerational Family](#) and [Saved by Science](#) considering positive directional movement on Vaccination Intent and minimal backlash effect. We'd also feel comfortable with a nuanced distribution of [Dedicated](#), and [Volunteer Vaccinator](#). Similarly, [I Didn't Think It Was Serious](#) might be great for more targeted distribution due to its fairly strong performance among Black audiences.
- Because [Multigenerational Family](#) saw solid, consistent positive movement, it might be worth exploring similar stories using families from different communities of color.
- The media portray an environment in which there are two sides of this issue: vaccinated Americans and those who are dead set against getting vaccinated. But there is still a significant segment of Americans who are simply still deciding, as evidenced by the sharp increase in people getting their first shots in the last week as the Delta variant picks up steam. There are ample stories to tell about people who were undecided and waited but ultimately decided to get vaccinated. It would be interesting to explore that angle incorporating the findings above (e.g., via a health care validator; through an emotionally powerful narrative; etc.)
- Relatedly, there are also millions of Americans who've been vaccinated since we launched this project, and ample angles to try in terms of their motivation – especially among those who only recently got vaccinated. You could really play with the tone of these videos—from everything to guilt and peer pressure (similar to get-out-the-vote-style messaging) to recent science around the Delta variant's dangerous implications for our communities.
- We've all seen the tragic quotes from grieving family members about sick or dying loved ones who wished they could go back and get the vaccine. They hit



hard, similar to Carla Brown’s Story, and it would be interesting to know if that helps motivate others who are undecided.

- Based on the performance of [Desus & Mero](#), it’d be worth exploring additional voices that don’t align with the conventional wisdom about trusted messengers to discover if there are other voices that can be effective at delivering this message broadly or to specific segments of our target audiences.

Appendix

Top Performing Videos By Metric – Overall

*Results in *italics* are not statistically significant.

Vaccination Intent

Unvaccinated (All)	Unvaccinated Under 30	Unvaccinated POC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carla Brown (+5.6%) • Desus & Mero (+3.7%) • <i>Saved by Science (+1.1%)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carla Brown (+5.3%) • Desus & Mero (+4.1%) • <i>Feelings (+0.7%)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desus & Mero (+4.9%) • Carla Brown (+4.7%) • <i>Multigenerational (+1.3%)</i>

COVID Behavior

Unvaccinated (All)	Unvaccinated Under 30	Unvaccinated POC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carla Brown (+2.4%) • Desus & Mero (+1.8%) • Multigenerational (+1.3%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carla Brown (+1.9%) • <i>Desus & Mero (+1.5%)</i> • <i>Multigenerational (+1.2%)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desus & Mero (+2.7%) • Carla Brown (+2.4%) • <i>Multigenerational (+0.7%)</i>

Social Trust



Unvaccinated (All)	Unvaccinated Under 30	Unvaccinated POC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carla Brown (+2.7%) • Saved by Science (+0.9%) • Native American (+0.8%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carla Brown (+3.1%) • Saved by Science (+1.2%) • Multigenerational (+0.8%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carla Brown (+1.9%) • Saved by Science (+1.4%) • Volunteer Vaccinator (0.8%)

Institutional Trust

Unvaccinated (All)	Unvaccinated Under 30	Unvaccinated POC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carla Brown (+2.4%) • Multigenerational (+1.8%) • Desus & Mero (+1.5%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carla Brown (+1.7%) • Desus & Mero (+1.2%) • Dedicated (+0.6%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carla Brown (+1.7%) • Multigenerational (+1.6%) • Desus & Mero (+1.4%)

Individual Change

Unvaccinated (All)	Unvaccinated Under 30	Unvaccinated POC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carla Brown (+0.5%) • Desus & Mero (-0.2%) • Dedicated (-0.6%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carla Brown (+0.2%) • Feelings (+0.1%) • Dedicated (+0.0%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carla Brown (+0.7%) • Desus & Mero (+0.0%) • Multigenerational (-0.3%)

Summary of change in intent to vaccinate, among unvaccinated

	Asian	Black	Latino/a	White	Other	Overall
Desus & Mero	5	5.3	4.9	2.5	3.2	3.7
Carla Brown	5	4.7	4.9	6.6	4.2	5.6
Saved by science	3.2	1.3	1.6	0.7	0.3	1.1
Multigenerational family	2.8	1.5	0.1	1	1.3	1



Volunteer vaccinator	-1.3	1.2	0.4	-1.7	-1.7	0.4
Dedicated	-1.4	1.1	0.5	0.2	1.2	-0.1
I didn't think it was serious	-0.2	0.1	-0.1	-0.4	1.7	-0.9
Native American clinician	-2.5	-0.1	-1.8	-2.4	-1.7	-1.8

Full List of Creative Assets

- [Dedicated](#)
- [I Didn't Think It Was Serious](#)
- [Multigenerational Family](#)
- [Native American Clinician](#)
- [Saved by Science](#)
- [Volunteer Vaccinator](#)
- [Desus & Mero - Get Vaccinated](#), Versions [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), and [4](#)
- [This is Carla Brown's #MadetoSave Story](#), and the [unbranded version of this video can be found here](#)

Full test methodology and results are available upon request. Contact salim.zymet@civcnation.org with any questions.

