



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SBT Counter-Marketing and Awareness Campaign
Research Findings and Recommendations

APRIL 2020

the Vida
AGENCY

Key Findings

Between December 2019 and April 2020, The Vida Agency conducted qualitative and quantitative research to inform development of a public awareness and counter-marketing campaign that would highlight the adverse health effects of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) and promote healthier alternatives. Research included a focus group of forty Seattle-based young adults, a digital self-administered survey of 510 individuals in the Seattle-Metropolitan Area, and a case study interview with Chief Seattle Club.

Research prioritized insight from Black, Latinx, American Indian / Alaska Native, and low-income communities, particularly youth and young adults between the age of 12-29.

For comparison purposes, charts and percentages indicate responses from:

- “Priority Population,” based on 203 responses from Black, Latinx, American Indian / Alaska Native, and low-income communities, particularly youth and young adults between the age of 12-29.
- “General Population,” based on all 510 survey responses.

Knowledge of SSB health risk does not indicate healthy rates of sugary drink consumption.

For young adults, consuming more than 8 oz of sugary beverages in a week is a contributing factor to several chronic and deadly health conditions. 95% of survey respondents associate SSBs with a serious health risk, with the greatest association to weight gain, obesity, Type 2 Diabetes, and tooth decay. Additionally, Focus Group participants indicated heightened concern about health conditions that run in their family.

However, while 81% of Priority Population survey respondents believe that sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) are bad for their health, 96% consumed more than the doctor recommended limit of SSBs in the week prior to taking the survey.

Most survey respondents believe they currently consume a healthy amount of sugar, while on average consuming 59-88% of their daily sugar limit from sugary beverages alone. Survey respondents consumed an average of 3.7 sugary drinks (roughly 44 oz) in the week prior to taking the survey.

Sugary drinks are offered in 90% of Priority Population respondent households and 70% of schools, making it easy for young adults to over-consume.

SSBs are easily accessible in Priority Population homes, extracurricular activities, and schools, with 70% indicating that their school provides SSBs in vending machines, cafeterias, and at sporting events, and 90% indicating that SSBs are available in their home. While the majority of Priority Population respondents (87%) feel that their family is committed to their health and wellbeing, only 39% believe this about their school.



Key Findings

Juice, sugary coffee, and Coca Cola are the most consumed drinks by survey respondents, who drink them for taste, craving, convenience, and energy.

Respondents were asked which sugary drinks they consumed within the week prior to taking the survey. Overall, juice (41%), sugary coffee (26%), and Coca Cola (22%) were the most popular SSBs.

However, within the Priority Population, there was lower consumption of sweetened coffee (17%) than in adult populations, and higher consumption of Sprite (20%), which is currently being promoted by athlete LeBron James. LeBron James was mentioned 35 times by survey respondents when asked which celebrities they've seen promoting SSBs.

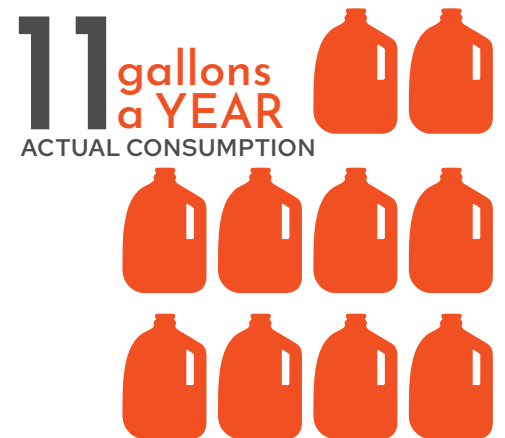
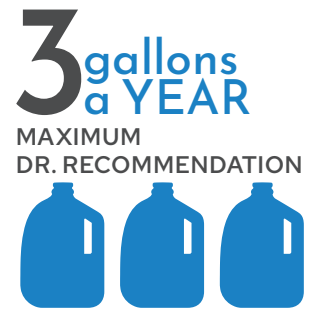
Juice, the most consumed SSB by respondents across all demographics, presents an added risk as many respondents believe drinking juice is good for their health, and many do not consider it to be a "sugary beverage." Rather, juice was itself considered a healthy alternative to sodas by some.

Water is the preferred alternative to Sugar Sweetened Beverages.

- Respondents indicated that they consume non-SSBs primarily for hydration, health, and taste.
- Water was the most popular alternative for survey respondents across demographics, with a preference to consume water from the tap or from a reusable water bottle.
- Priority Population respondents who had consumed eight or more glasses of water in the 24 hours prior to taking the survey drank fewer SSBs than their peers.

Annual Sugary Beverage Consumption

PRIORITY POPULATION



Source: 2020 Sweet Survey Response

SSB Perception vs. Habit

PRIORITY POPULATION

54%

believe they currently consume a healthy amount of sugar

81%

believe that SSBs are bad for their health

96%

consumed more than the doctor recommended limit of SSBs in the week prior to survey

Source: 2020 Sweet Survey Response

Key Recommendations

Focus Counter Marketing on Juice

Juice was the most preferred sugar-sweetened beverage of survey respondents, with 41% of respondents consuming fruit juice in the week prior to taking the survey. Many survey respondents and focus group participants believe that drinking juice is good for their health. Many perceive the drink as being “zero sugar” when in fact the average glass of juice contains 20-26 grams of sugar.

Focus Health Risk Awareness Marketing on Type 2 Diabetes

Focus group participants noted being most concerned with the health risks that run in their family. A quarter of Priority Population respondents indicated that they have a family member who suffers from the condition.

Promote Water as a Non-Sugary Alternative.

Water was the most popular alternative to SSBs by survey respondents across demographics. Priority Population respondents who consumed over eight glasses of water in the 24 hours prior to taking the survey drank fewer sugary beverages on average than their peers. Increasing water consumption amongst the Priority Population will likely decrease SSB consumption.

Craft Campaign Messaging that is Positive and Water-Focused

Survey respondents prefer a positive message focused on water. The campaign message, “Water: The official drink of athletes everywhere,” was considered most interesting to survey respondents, who found the message to be clear, understandable, and memorable.

Engage Communities in Activities which Increase Access to Water

Most Priority Population survey respondents and focus group participants indicated that they are most likely to participate in campaign activities that involve increasing access to water, such as distributing reusable water bottles, identifying broken or dirty water fountains, or participating in a 30-day water challenge. “Get a free reusable water bottle when you sign up for the 30-day water challenge!” was the second most popular campaign message, with many write-in comments favoring the idea of free water bottles and a challenge campaign.



***“We need to remind people that these drinks have served a purpose, and now that we have more information and resources, we know better.*”**

I knew sugary drinks were bad for me, even before I worked in public health. But it just takes time to pull back all those layers of colonialization and racism that have ensured that people of color are unhealthy.”

– Colleen Echohawk, Chief Seattle Club