

August 13, 1981

TO: Mr. H. H. Cudd, Jr.

Subject: NASCAR Focus Group Perspective

### Introduction

The NASCAR enthusiast focus group (MDD 81-1626) was the first research project initiated for Special Events Planning and Development. Two previous projects were completed by the T. H. Land Research Group in 1978 and 1979 (see Special Events Research, T. H. Land), but the results provided little insight into our present needs. Our present needs for information about event enthusiast attendees is critical in order to deal with strategic questions concerning the relative fit of individual series to the brand target markets.

### Background

Specifically, we have defined our present needs as follows. Jack Bellis has concurred in his memo on 2/23 (Research Plan for Special Events), but I think we still need to clarify our priorities.

1. Demographics on the enthusiast attendee of each event, including age, sex, income level, education.
2. Attitudes about the importance of the event in an individual's lifestyle, including the number of races attended and whether an enthusiast listens to radio/TV broadcasts when not attending an event.
3. Perceptions of: 1) how sponsors in general are viewed, and, specifically, how WINSTON is viewed as a sponsor, and 2) awareness of brand imagery.

### Major Conclusions and Comments

The result of the focus group research should be viewed cautiously. The sample size was extremely small (5 participants), since recruitment of qualified people who fit the sample criteria proved very difficult using newspaper ads. However, certain qualitative insights were gained about our needs for information on attitudes and perceptions.

Major Conclusions and Comments (continued)

- Age group 19-26, all male.
- Interest developed in childhood by attending races/listening to radio broadcasts.
- Present interests are based on attraction of "super stars" to the NASCAR series; the expense, sophistication and speed of race cars; and the party atmosphere prior to and during the race.
- Attended at least four or five races annually and did not take wives or girlfriends.
- Sponsorship viewed as good advertising for the products and, in general, were "top of the line" products; however, it was difficult to draw out the relationship between sponsorship and trial/usage for non-automotive products.
- The association between WINSTON and NASCAR racing was strong with a firm understanding of the series and point fund.
- Awareness of brand imagery was minimal. Brand advertising for Special Events began in 1981, so our present campaign had little time to register with enthusiasts at the time of the focus group.
- Respondents felt current advertising could be more exciting, referring to the use of models to register imagery rather than simply action. However, advertising incorporating strictly action would not communicate the desired brand imagery.

Recommendations

MDD will soon have the results of a study based on the Consumer Tracking System. Shortly, we should also receive names generated from sweepstakes. These names should provide a large sample we could use for telephone interviews. With the information from the Consumer Tracking System, we should be able to define our needs about demographics, attitudes and perceptions.

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Recommendations (continued)

Focus groups may be helpful in the future, depending on the results from the two sources above. Telephone interviews using the names already generated from the sweepstakes should prove more cost effective than additional focus groups at this time.

D. M. Crump

DMC:as

cc: Ms. D. C. Sills  
Mr. Jack Bellis