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Measuring Impact of “Can Do” Park Signage on Civic Engagement

Prepared for: Charlotte Urban Design

Overview

In order to measure the potential impact of Charlotte’s “Can Do” signage on civic engagement, the Center for Active Design embarked on a national survey experiment. We surveyed 5,188 Americans from 26 select small, medium, and large cities across the country in August of 2016.

We randomly assigned one of three photos of signs to respondents.

Photo 1: Rules (N=1,898)  Photo 2: Can Do (N=1,841)

Photo 3: Can Hive Five (N=1,760)

The respondents were asked to imagine they lived in the community depicted in the photo. After seeing their assigned photo, the survey asked respondents two questions:

1. “How proud are you to live in this community?” (Not at all, Not very, Somewhat, Very much, A great deal)
2. “How well do you think the city cares about people in this park?” (Not well at all, Not very well, Somewhat well, Very well, Extremely well)

Respondents did not know they were partaking in an experiment and were just asked for their honest opinion about the sign they were shown.

**Results**
We found that Photo 2 and Photo 3 increased both pride in community and the perception that the city cared about the people in the park. For instance, while only 50% of those shown Photo 1 – Rules had a lot of pride in their community, 55% of people shown Photo 2 – Can Do and 61% of people shown Photo 3 – High Five felt the same. **In other words, the High Five sign increased levels of extreme pride in the community by 11 percentage points relative to the Rules Sign.**

We found similar results in terms of the perception that the city cares about park users: the High Five sign increased perceptions that the city cared about community members by 9 percentage points relative to the Rules sign.

![Comparison of pride levels across different signs](image-url)
"How well do you think the city cares about people in this park?"

- Not well at all / Not very well:
  - Photo 1: Rules: 14%
  - Photo 2: Can Do - Photo: 12%
  - Photo 3: Can Do – Hive Five: 10%

- Somewhat well:
  - Photo 1: Rules: 37%
  - Photo 2: Can Do - Photo: 37%
  - Photo 3: Can Do – Hive Five: 32%

- Very well/ Extremely well:
  - Photo 1: Rules: 48%
  - Photo 2: Can Do - Photo: 51%
  - Photo 3: Can Do – Hive Five: 57%