

Why we have spokespersons in arrive alive DRIVE SOBER® PSAs

For two+ decades arrive alive DRIVE SOBER® messages have been providing strategies for getting home safely, issuing gentle and severe reminders to drive sober, expressing gratitude for designated drivers and responsible hosts, and educating on new legislation¹. Our PSAs are deliberated by our volunteer Marketing Committee who reference research and focus testing in the determination of production and content.

We use a “social norm marketing” approach², to motivate drivers to do the right thing: call home, take a cab, stay overnight, or designate a driver. As most people drive sober almost all of the time, we also thank drivers for making good choices. In “A Study of National Radio and Television PSAs”³ researchers found that “everyone knows not to drink and drive”; they recommended using messaging that isn’t preachy and instead addresses “how to” drive sober; they also recommended using celebrities and peers as spokespersons. Recent research complements these findings: in 2009, University of Regina Professor Anne M. Lavack assessed English language drunk driving messaging and use of a “Protection Motivation Theory”⁴.

With support from government, police, media, and celebrities, and using positive research-based messaging, arrive alive DRIVE SOBER has been able to weave effective drunk driving prevention strategies into the colloquialism of communities. In 24 years of campaigning we have been fortunate and grateful to see significant changes: a “fundamental shift in the attitudes towards impaired driving”⁵.

Originally targeting the summer months, our campaign achieved remarkable reductions in the high numbers of fatalities that used to occur during this once high-risk time⁶. And the changed social climate towards impaired driving has allowed us to secure support from high profile contacts including NHL players, race car drivers, musicians, and other personalities and professionals to enhance our public awareness messages.

We gratefully acknowledge some of those who have volunteered their talent:

- **Musicians and composers:** Blondie, Cancel Winter, Doane Leblanc, E.M.I. Publishing, Chantal Kreviasuk, Charlie Major, Amy Nodwell, Ed Robertson, Shania Twain (“any man of mine”), Universal Publishing, and Michelle Wright
- **Pro Athletes:** Jennifer Botterill, Wendel Clark, Cory Clouston, Tie Domi, Ron Fellows, Patrick Lalime, Mike Morreale, Jude St. John, Mats Sundin, Paul Tracy, Antoine Vermette, and Ron Wilson
- **Comedians:** Spencer Rice
- **Paramedics and Police:** Toronto Police Chief William Blair, OPP Chief Supt. Bill Grodzinski, OPP Supt. Jay Hope, Toronto Supt. Earl Witty, RCMP Sgt. André Lemaire, and Roberta Scott (Toronto EMS Level III Paramedic)

arrive alive DRIVE SOBER’s budget is remarkably small, making the volume, quality and reach of the work completed even more impressive. Spokespersons and publishing companies are not remunerated; they all volunteer their time, talent and celebrity for the cause.

In 2011, arrive alive DRIVE SOBER PSAs were aired by (at least) 81 radio stations in Ontario alone, and 52 television stations across Canada. Most recent statistics in Ontario revealed a 29% reduction in the number of impaired driving fatalities over a one year period.

¹ “21 and under”; “Warn Range legislation”; “Impaired Boating = Impaired Driving”

² <http://www.mostofus.org/>

³ Charles Atkins, William DeJong, 1992

⁴ Social marketing campaigns aimed at preventing drunk driving, University of Regina, 2009

⁵ Strategic Counsel, 2004

⁶ Summer months have seen a 70% decrease in the number of drink drive fatalities