

FLASH MOB

A flash mob is a quick and very effective way to do activism with little risk of backlash, and high potential for spreading your message. A flash mob is any type of activity in which activists meet at a specific location at a specific time (generally popular, crowded place and time), stage a demonstration or activism activity, and leave just as suddenly as they arrived. The public is not only educated, but they are left bewildered and wanting more. Following this up with a call to action is crucial (either a petition drive, letter writing campaign, or calling campaign).

For example, get a group of 20 youth to meet at the food court in a local mall at 1:00 PM. Have 17 of them suddenly drop to the floor while the remaining three hold posters with the following message, "17 Americans die every 4 hours from second-hand smoke. Support smoke-free laws." Within a few minutes, have all the youth get up and leave quickly. The point is to do something disruptive to draw attention to a specific message. Be creative to figure out how you can incorporate a call to action in with this event.

Here's how to do it:

A few days before the activity:

- Select a time, date and location for your flash mob. The activity will be most effective in a place that is crowded, such as a mall, street corner, or busy park.
- Create a flyer that advertises the event and give it to as many youth as possible. Advertise not only the flash mob event, but also a planning meeting that must happen prior to the event itself (see day before the activity). Stress that all participants must arrive on time for the event, otherwise it will not work.
- Contact the local media and let them know what you plan to do. Be sure to give them the date, time and location of the event, and mention that you will have great visuals! Send a press release to them to follow up immediately.

Day before the activity:

- Meet to discuss the logistics of the flash mob. Brainstorm ideas for an effective flash mob activity.
- Once you've chosen a flash mob activity, make sure everyone knows where and when the flash mob will take place, and what they should be doing.
- Follow-up with potential media contacts reminding them of your event.
- Pick out key youth to be interviewed if a media opportunity comes up.

Day of the activity:

- Do it, and repeat it! Because this activity is completed so quickly, it can be done multiple times at multiple locations.
- Have someone take pictures of your flash mob in action.

Don't Forget!:

- Email your event report to staff@txsaywhat.com for a chance to win scholarships to the 2014 Say What! Texas Tobacco-Free Conference!

Adapted from:

<http://www.kickbuttsday.org/search-activities>