Consumer Smoke Alarm Perspectives
A ONE-PAGE TAKEAWAY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

GOALS
- Understand perceptions and behaviors
- Develop communication strategies
- Draft and test messages and taglines
- Receive “buy-in” from stakeholders

METHODS
- Iterative, qualitative, year-long process
- “At-risk” audiences
- Six small, 90-minute focus groups
- 120 door-to-door intercept interviews in Va. and Fla.
- Online survey of 211 fire department professionals

CURRENT AND TARGET BEHAVIOR
OF SMOKE ALARMS

OWNING
Most believe they have at least one working alarm

Barriers:
- Perceived low risk and urgency
- Overall apathy exists
- Mental frame of “nuisance”

TESTING
Most do not push test button, and instead, rely on setting it off as “test.” Very few have specific plans and reminders

Barriers:
- Out of reach
- Out of control (renters)
- Lack of visual cue
- Perceived low risk
- “Unrealistic” recommendations
- Rely on chirp and cooking “tests”
- Easy to put off

MAINTAINING
Most don’t admit to disabling, but when disabled, visual cues help to restore

Barriers:
- Annoyance complaints:
  - The noise
  - Pets’ agitation
  - Frequency
  - “Malfunctions”

EFFECTIVE MESSAGING

FRAMEWORK
Combine Immediate Reward (showing you care) with New Information (how-to and believable) to create effective messaging

ELEMENTS
- Emotion (humanize and re-frame)
- Control (role of protector)
- “How-to” (rational balance)
- Actions (clear guidance)
- Vividness (clear and memorable)