



NHTSA

Impaired Driving Segmentation

2017

Part of the mission of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is to reduce alcohol-related fatalities on U.S. highways. Having an in-depth understanding of impaired drivers is essential to strategic communications campaign development for enforcement and social norming efforts.

This Playbook will introduce you to the four at-risk driver segments identified via quantitative survey and analysis of U.S. drivers. The segments are profiled by lifestyle traits, alcohol consumption, and perceptions of drunk driving.

Research Approach

NHTSA conducted a quantitative online survey with 2,201 (N=2,201) consumers. Responses were collected February 1-23, 2017. The average survey time was twenty-four (24) minutes.

The survey areas of questioning included:

- Consumer understanding and general profiling
- Drinking and driving behaviors
- Influences on drinking and driving attitudes and behaviors
- Advertising consumption and influence
- Additional profiling and interests

2,201

Consumers surveyed

24

Minutes to complete

4

Key segments emerged

Target Audience

The 2,201 consumers surveyed met the following criteria:

- **Licensed drivers**
- **Exhibit at-risk driving behaviors**
- **Age 21-54**
- **Drive at least 10 miles/week**
- **Drink alcoholic beverages at least once per month**
- **Mix of motor vehicle and motorcycle drivers/riders**
- **Mix of demographics and ethnicities**



Four segments emerged from the segmentation analysis:

Negligents



**21% of
impaired
drivers**

Heavy drinkers
unconcerned with
the consequences

Cautious Copers



**25% of
impaired
drivers**

Emotional drinkers
who can make poor
decisions

Oblivious Regulars



**8% of
impaired
drivers**

Risk takers who do
not understand the
consequences

Occasional Over-Indulgers



**35% of
impaired
drivers**

Proactive drinkers,
but one mistake is
all it takes

Negligents

Negligents are the biggest threat to drivers on the road, as they are frequent drinkers with little concern for the consequences of driving after drinking.

Negligents are stubborn drivers, believing drunk driving is overenforced despite many having been previously apprehended and charged with driving under the influence (DUI).

They are difficult to effectively impact through advertising, with many considering drinking slightly less or drinking lower percentage alcohol to be proactive drinking behaviors.



- **Drinking is a regular pastime**
- **Unconcerned with risk of driving after drinking**
- **Less concerned with DUI consequences**

Age

22% 21-29

39% 30-39

26% 40-49

14% 50-54



Drinking Attitudes and Behaviors

Drinking is a frequent pastime for Negligents, regularly consuming several types of alcohol throughout a typical week.

They drink because they enjoy the flavor of alcohol and the feeling or release they get while drinking.

57% drink
3+
times per week



Drink beer one or more times per week

66%

Total 62%



Drink liquor one or more times per week

41%

Total 40%

Drinking is a regular pastime. Negligents drink...

- To enjoy the taste
- To get a 'buzz'
- To get drunk
- When alone



Drinking and Driving

Negligents are quite cavalier when driving after drinking, taking few precautions when heading home after consuming alcoholic beverages.

They are primarily concerned with their own good time or experience when drinking, and do not view their risky behaviors as an issue for the general population.

Unsafe behaviors

- Drive self home after drinking
- Ride with a driver who drank as much
- Ride with a driver who drank more

Bad decisions

- Avoid riding home with a designated driver
- Less likely to take a taxi home after drinking
- Only use a designated driver when absolutely necessary

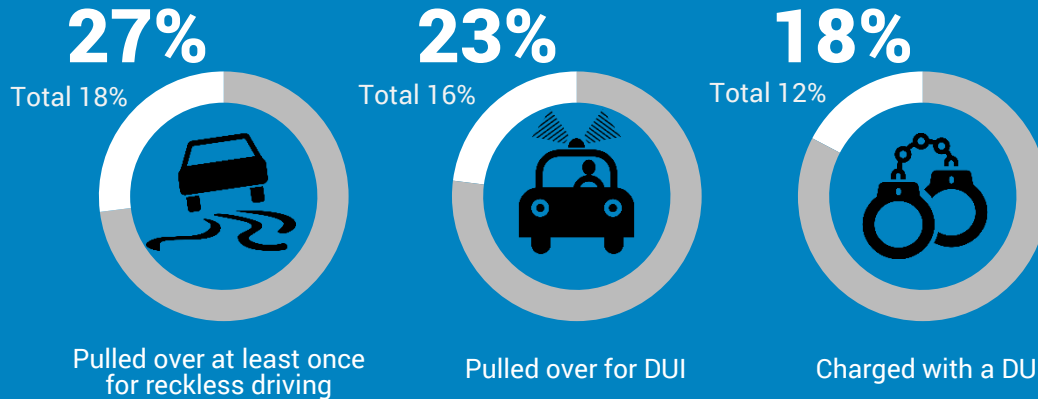
Careless attitude

- Say it's difficult to have fun as designated driver
- Do not like to leave vehicle behind after drinking
- Do not like admitting they drank too much

DUI Perceptions

Negligents are not particularly concerned with the ramifications of driving after drinking. Despite being personally charged or arrested for DUI-related incidents, Negligents feel DUI laws are overenforced. Negligents are more concerned with consequences that inconvenience their own lives when compared to their risk to others.

Prior Law Enforcement Experience



Negligents are more concerned with losing their licenses or legal and court costs than other DUI consequences.





Advertising and Influences

Negligents are stubborn in their attitudes toward drinking and driving, with most unlikely to be influenced by DUI prevention messaging. They tend to be surrounded by others who enable these behaviors and any changes resulting from advertising are minor and not effectively preventative.

Negligents believe...

- **“Ads do not make me rethink driving after drinking.”**
- **“The situations in ads are not believable.”**
- **“Ads are just trying to frighten viewers.”**

Ads do not change their behavior...

% agree*

Based on the ads I saw, I will never drink and drive

25%
Total 34%

Even after seeing ads, I will drive only if I've had 1-2 drinks

41%
Total 27%

After seeing ads I will still drive if I'm drinking beer or wine (but not liquor)

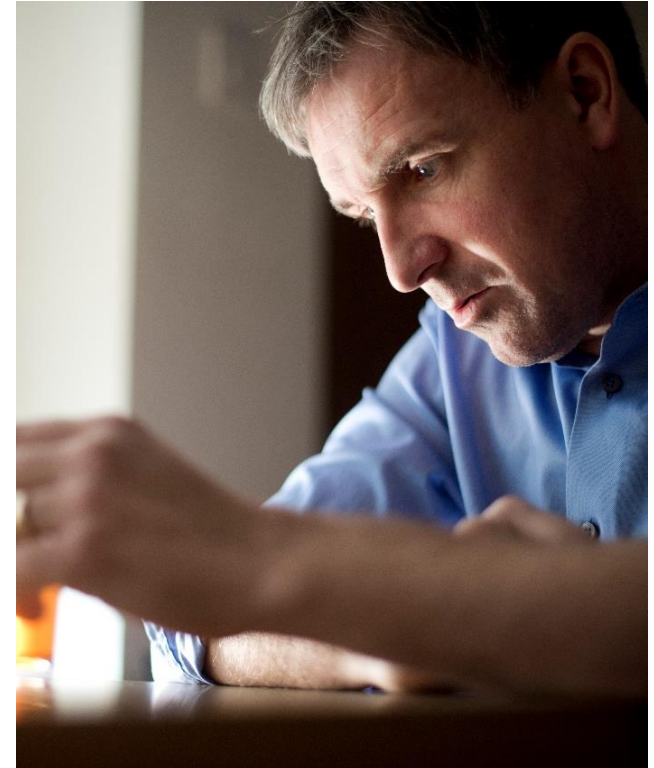
14%
Total 8%

“Your
choices will
cost you.”

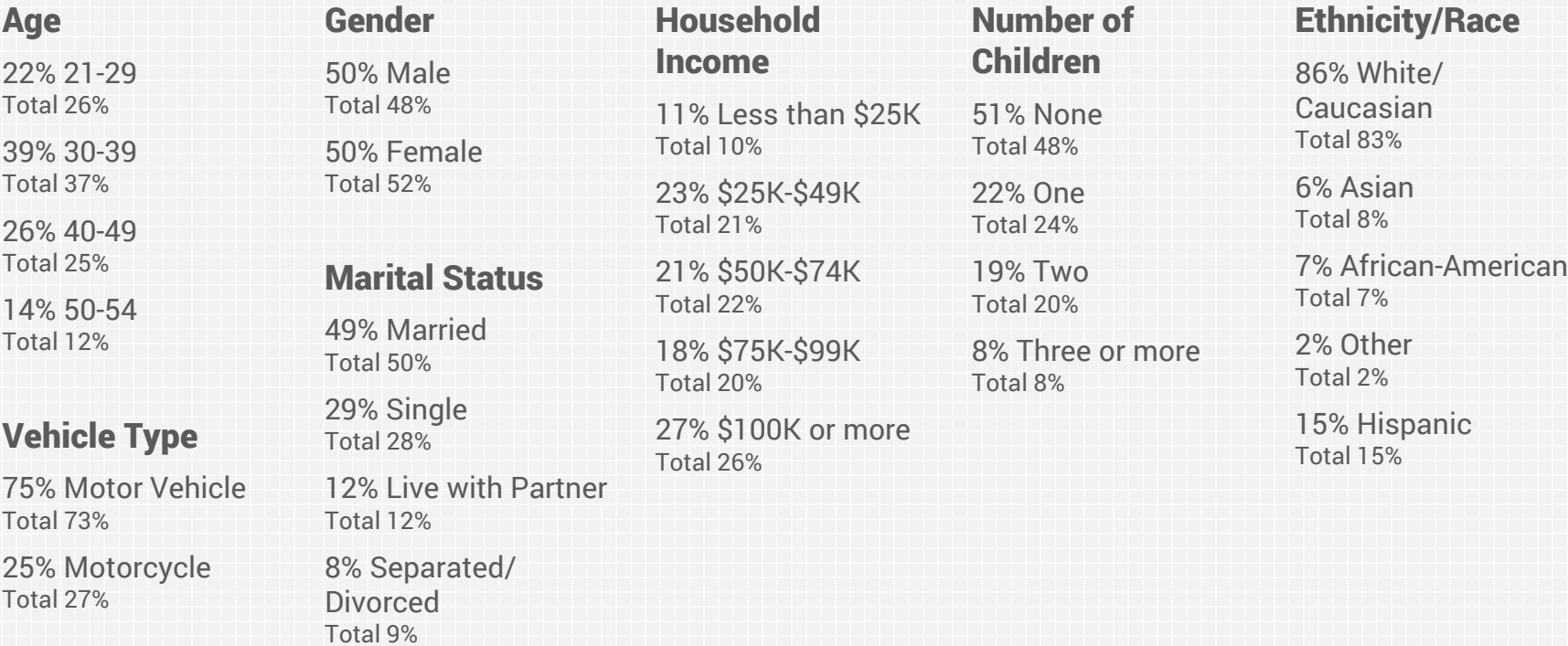
- **Focus on personal inconveniences**
- **Connect ‘inconvenience’ to bigger story about their life**

As Negligents are primarily concerned with the personal inconveniences of a DUI charge, such as costs or court appearances, consider centering messages on how these inconveniences would impact their day-to-day lives, as this is likely the only messaging to which they will respond.

Recommendation



Negligents Demographics

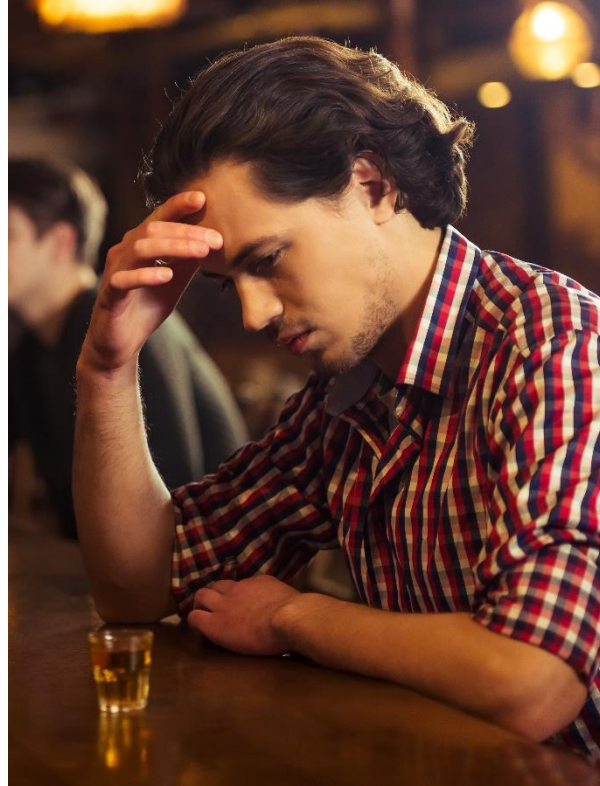


Cautious Copers

Cautious Copers are emotionally driven drinkers, resorting to alcohol as a means of easing negative thoughts or distress. They drink regularly, though usually at home or by themselves. Although they may not necessarily intend to, they easily lose control of how much they have had to drink, which can lead to reckless driving decisions.

Cautious Copers understand the severity of driving after drinking, as many have had prior experiences with law enforcement for driving under the influence. The impact of a DUI is clear and they are sufficiently proactive to prevent driving under the influence.

Cautious Copers are more likely influenced by those close to them, such as friends or family.



- **Emotion and stress trigger drinking**
- **Moderately proactive about drinking and driving**
- **Aware of consequences of DUI charge**

Age

22% 21-29

41% 30-39

25% 40-49

12% 50-54

Drinking Attitudes and Behaviors

54% Total 22%
Drink after bad news

45% Total 34%
Drink after a stressful day


Cautious Copers primarily use drinking as a means of dealing with negative emotions or feelings of social awkwardness. They often drink at home by


36% Total 29%
Drink to feel comfortable socially


30% Total 23%
Drink alone

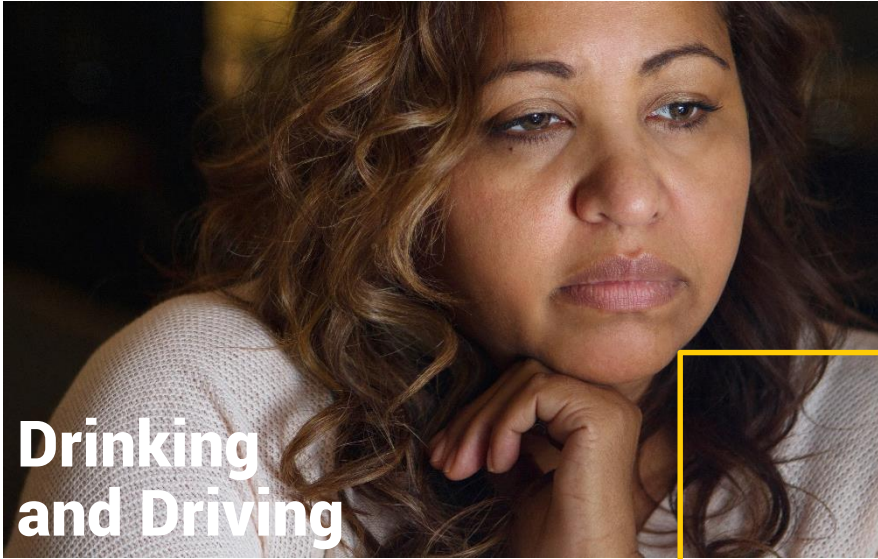
themselves and seek comfort in the escape of being drunk or buzzed. They regularly drink beer or liquor, including shots.

Regular Drinkers

 Drink beer one or more times per week **62%**
Total 62%

 Drink liquor one or more times per week **43%**
Total 41%

 Drink liquor as a shot **47%**
Total 42%



38%



Drive 10 mph
over speed limits
Total 33%

18%



Drive 15 mph
over speed limits
Total 16%

Cautious Copers lack restraint when drinking, often losing track of the amount of alcohol they have consumed. They are more likely to engage in poor driving behaviors in general, which can be aggravated by unfiltered drinking.

61% 64%



Realize when they have had
too much to drink to drive

31% 25%



Difficulty having fun as
designated driver

25% 19%



Do not realize they have had
too much to drink

23% 21%



Prefer not to leave vehicle
behind after drinking

22% 24%



Do not worry about alcohol
consumption

DUI Perceptions

Cautious Copers are aware of the potential consequences of driving under the influence, with many having arrests or encounters with police in the past. They tend to be sufficiently proactive about safe drinking and driving and understand the impact a DUI can have on their lives and the lives of others.

82%

Believe getting a DUI is a serious offense

Total 82%

82%

Believe a DUI conviction would have great impact

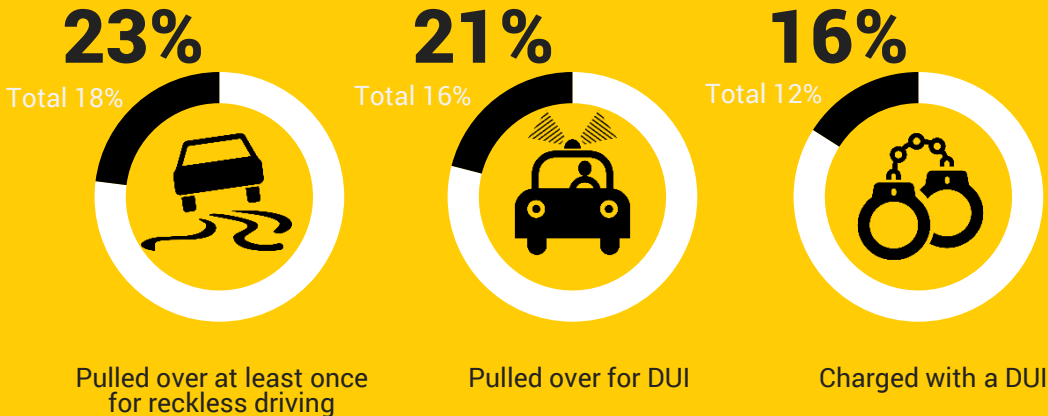
Total 82%

68%

Feel responsible for themselves when drinking

Total 65%

Prior Law Enforcement Experience



Advertising and Influences

Cautious Copers are not likely to be influenced by traditional advertisements about the dangers of drinking and driving, finding them unrealistic.

Messages with personal relevance are more impactful, such as stories or social media content from friends and family.



"Drinking and driving advertisements do not apply to me."

20%

Total 16%

"Situations in drinking and driving ads are not believable."

15%

Total 13%

Messaging that resonates:

- **Friend or family member was in a crash**
- **Stories about crashes from family and friends**
- **Social media postings about increased enforcement**
- **Social media postings about the dangers of drinking and driving**

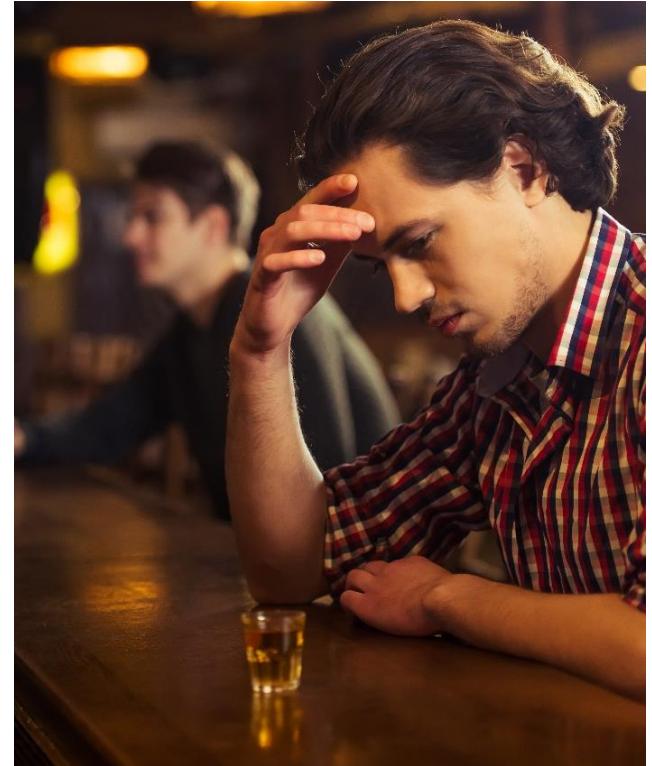
“Is a DUI worth it?”

- **Connect messaging to stress and emotional triggers**
- **Offer other outlets for negative emotions**
- **Call out steep penalties for DUI offenses**

While Cautious Copers have the right idea about driving under the influence, they still often make poor choices due to drinking as a means of escape.

Highlight messaging around stressors and triggers Cautious Copers routinely experience while posing the question “Is drinking to cope worth a DUI?” Messaging can also propose other outlets for dealing with negative emotions leading to more positive outcomes.

Recommendation



Cautious Copers Demographics

Age

22% 21-29
Total 26%

41% 30-39
Total 37%

25% 40-49
Total 25%

12% 50-54
Total 12%

Vehicle Type

73% Motor Vehicle
Total 73%

27% Motorcycle
Total 27%

Gender

49% Male
Total 48%

51% Female
Total 52%

Marital Status

48% Married
Total 50%

29% Single
Total 28%

12% Live with Partner
Total 12%

10% Separated/
Divorced
Total 9%

Household Income

13% Less than \$25K
Total 10%

21% \$25K-\$49K
Total 21%

23% \$50K-\$74K
Total 22%

19% \$75K-\$99K
Total 20%

23% \$100K or more
Total 26%

Number of Children

48% None
Total 48%

24% One
Total 24%

20% Two
Total 20%

8% Three or more
Total 8%

Ethnicity/Race

84% White/
Caucasian
Total 83%

7% Asian
Total 8%

9% African-American
Total 7%

3% Other
Total 2%

16% Hispanic
Total 15%

Oblivious Regulars

Oblivious Regulars are socially active, including alcoholic beverages during most meals or occasions. They take less initiative with safety when drinking, having an optimistic perspective that their behaviors do not put themselves or others at risk.

Though Oblivious Regulars feel drunk drivers should be disciplined, they do not consider themselves to be in this category and have minimal understanding of the consequences of a DUI arrest. Few have experience with law enforcement for driving under the influence.

They are highly influenced by DUI prevention advertising, with many making noticeable behavioral changes after seeing the dangers of driving under the influence.



- **Regular drinkers**
- **Unaware of their role in putting others at risk**
- **Highly influenced by prevention advertising**

Age

28% 21-29

42% 30-39

22% 40-49

8% 50-54



Drinking Attitudes and Behaviors

73%

Drink beer one or more times per week
Total 62%

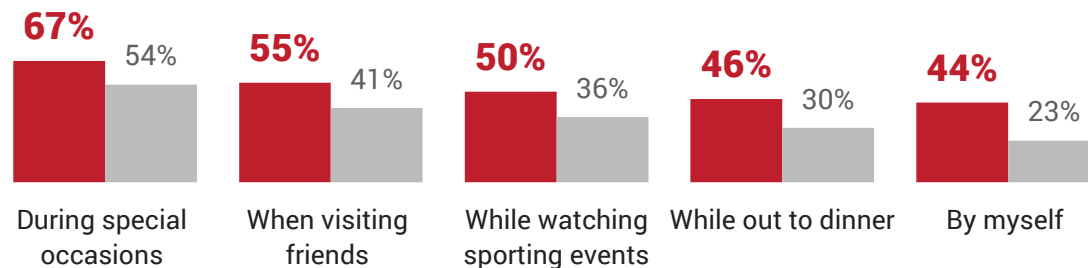
52%

Drink liquor one or more times per week
Total 41%

Oblivious Regulars consider alcohol a normal part of their day-to-day routine, consuming beverages at a variety of meals, events, and occasions.

They tend to drink a variety of alcohol types regularly, and do not typically drink in response to emotional stress or triggers.

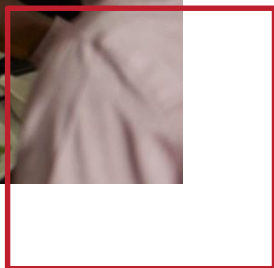
Alcoholic beverages are part of their routine





Drinking and Driving

Oblivious Regulars are casual about driving after drinking, with many less concerned about taking proper safety measures. They are optimistic and unafraid to take risks, including driving home after drinking.



Relative to other segments, Oblivious Regulars describe themselves as

- **Positive**
- **Optimistic**
- **Adventurous**
- **Risk-Takers**



Cavalier about driving after drinking

Only **60%** feel responsible for taking care of themselves when drinking

Total 65%

29% say they use a designated driver only when absolutely necessary

Total 26%

27% say they do not worry about alcohol consumption

Total 24%

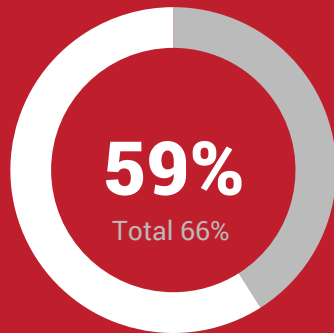
DUI Perceptions

Although Oblivious Regulars feel drunk drivers should be apprehended, they do not personally feel at risk despite their risky behaviors.

They do not consider DUI charges a serious offense, likely due to the fact that most have never had run-ins with law enforcement or been pulled over while driving under the influence.

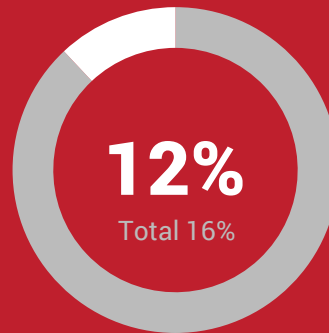
Oblivious Regulars are casual about DUI

A DUI arrest is severe



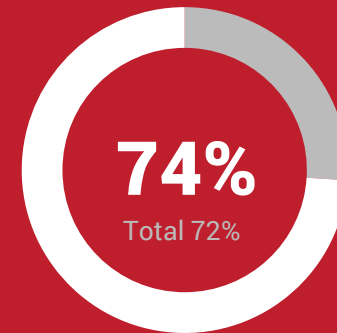
But have had less actual experiences

Have been pulled over for DUI



Instead they see DUI as an issue for others

Law enforcement should be strict on drunk drivers



Advertising and Influences

Prevention advertising resonates with Oblivious Regulars, with many changing their behaviors in response to seeing relevant ads.

However, they are prone to disassociate from situations depicted in ads, feeling the consequences will not impact their lives.

DUI advertising resonates

"I continue to think about DUI advertising."

44%

Total 33%

"After seeing ads, I have a designated driver when I go out."

51%

Total 37%

But is not associated with their lives

57% **64%**



Friends, family involved in crash

56% **56%**



Hear stories about crashes from friends, family

How to reach them

- **Crash statistics**
- **National news stories**
- **Ads about dangers of drinking and driving**
- **Ads about increased enforcement**
- **Social media posts about dangers of DUI**

“You are
part of the
problem.”

- **Set the stakes**
- **Make it real and relevant**
- **Emphasize risky behaviors**

Oblivious Regulars are capable of understanding the severity of driving under the influence, though they do not see themselves as at-risk.

Messaging to Oblivious Regulars should emphasize the behaviors which put drivers at risk of driving under the influence, while making it clear that Oblivious Regulars may be exhibiting these behaviors.

Recommendation



Oblivious Regulars Demographics

Age

28% 21-29
Total 26%

42% 30-39
Total 37%

22% 40-49
Total 25%

8% 50-54
Total 12%

Vehicle Type

63% Motor Vehicle
Total 73%

37% Motorcycle
Total 27%

Gender

57% Male
Total 48%

43% Female
Total 52%

Marital Status

48% Married
Total 50%

32% Single
Total 28%

9% Live with Partner
Total 12%

6% Separated/
Divorced
Total 9%

Household Income

9% Less than \$25K
Total 10%

21% \$25K-\$49K
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18% \$50K-\$74K
Total 22%

21% \$75K-\$99K
Total 20%

31% \$100K or more
Total 26%

Number of Children

42% None
Total 48%

22% One
Total 24%

26% Two
Total 20%

10% Three or more
Total 8%

Ethnicity/Race

69% White/
Caucasian
Total 83%

15% Asian
Total 8%

12% African-
American
Total 7%

2% Other
Total 2%

19% Hispanic
Total 15%

Occasional Over-Indulgers

Occasional Over-Indulgers are the least at-risk drivers, limiting alcohol consumption to occasions with friends or family. They are proactive drinkers, taking safety precautions such as securing alternative transportation. Though they strive to ensure they do not drive under the influence, they occasionally make poor decisions after drinking.

Occasional Over-Indulgers feel DUI laws should be strictly enforced and fully understand the consequences of a DUI charge. They typically do not have DUI-related run-ins and intend to prevent encounters in the future.

Occasional Over-Indulgers are surrounded by a positive network of people who reinforce positive behaviors.



- **Least at-risk**
- **Mostly proactive, but occasionally make bad decisions**
- **Strive to avoid DUIs**

Age

30% 21-29

34% 30-39

25% 40-49

11% 50-54



Drinking Attitudes and Behaviors

Occasional Over-Indulgers drink moderately, typically during planned outings or events with friends or family.

Drinking is more of a pre-planned social activity, with most unlikely to drink as a result of emotional triggers.

40% of Occasional Over-Indulgers drink

1-2

times per week

Total 33%

82%

Total 78%

Drink with friends

64%

Total 54%

Drink with others

57%

Total 49%

Drink to celebrate

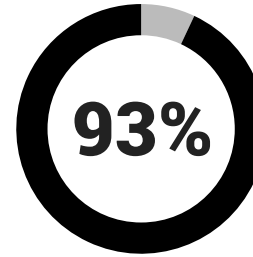
30%

Total 26%

Invited by others to drink

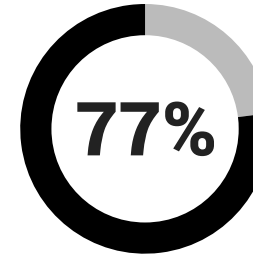
Drinking and Driving

Occasional Over-Indulgers are cautious about driving after drinking, taking active measures to ensure they avoid risky situations. They tend to obey traffic laws when driving and seek alternative transportation if they have been drinking.



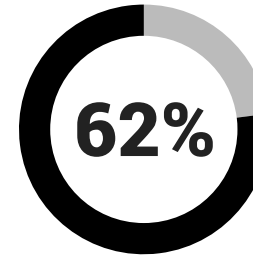
Would rather be **safe than sorry** when drinking

Total 85%



Ride with **designated drivers**

Total 69%



Take a **taxi**

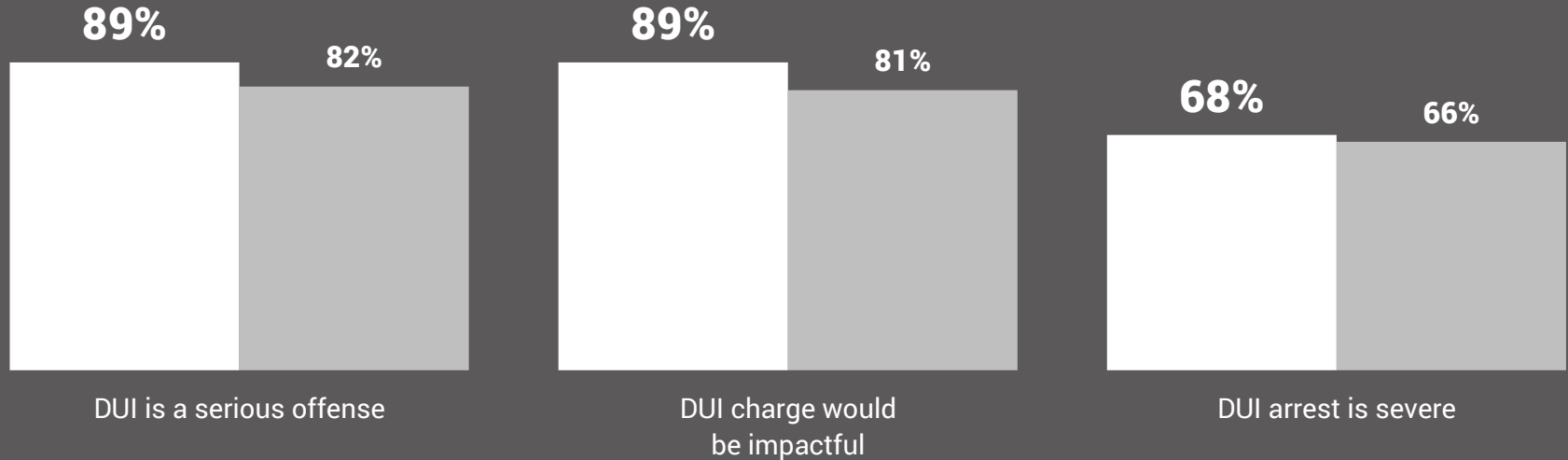
Total 56%

DUI Perceptions

Occasional Over-Indulgers have a rigid stance on driving under the influence, preferring strict enforcement of DUI laws and apprehension of drunk drivers. They are less likely to have prior run-ins with law enforcement due to driving after drinking, considering a DUI to be a negative life-changing event.

Segment is less likely to have been:

- **Charged with a DUI**
- **Pulled over for DUI**
- **Stopped for reckless driving**





Advertising and Influences

77%

Family is against drinking and driving

Total 70%

64%

Friends are against drinking and driving

Total 59%

Occasional Over-Indulgers are surrounded by others who reinforce positive behaviors. While more traditional advertising for DUI prevention is less impactful, Occasional Over-Indulgers are impacted when sources close to them are affected by drinking and driving.

What messages resonate

- **Stories about crashes from family and friends**
- **Friends and family involved in crashes**
- **Local news stories about crashes**

And what doesn't

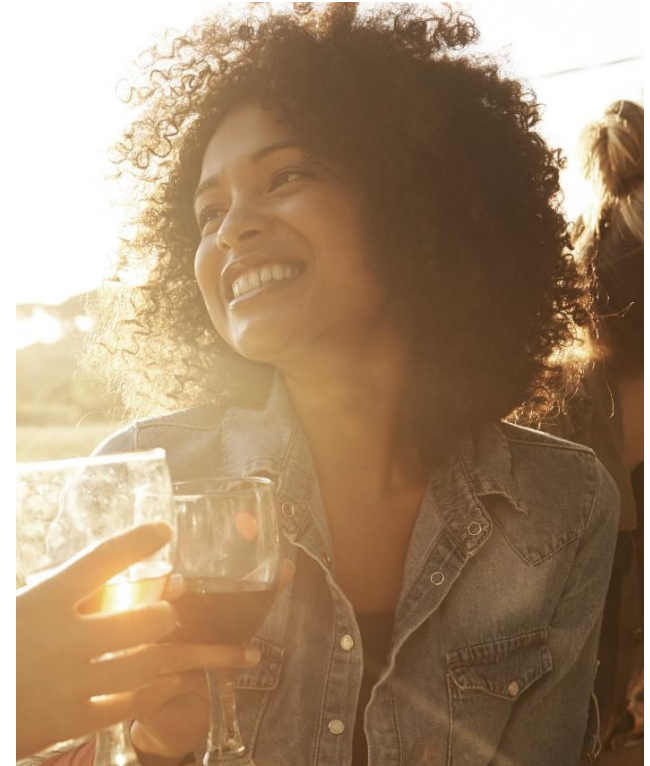
- **Statistics about crashes**
- **National news stories about crashes**
- **Ads about dangers of drinking and driving**

Recommendation

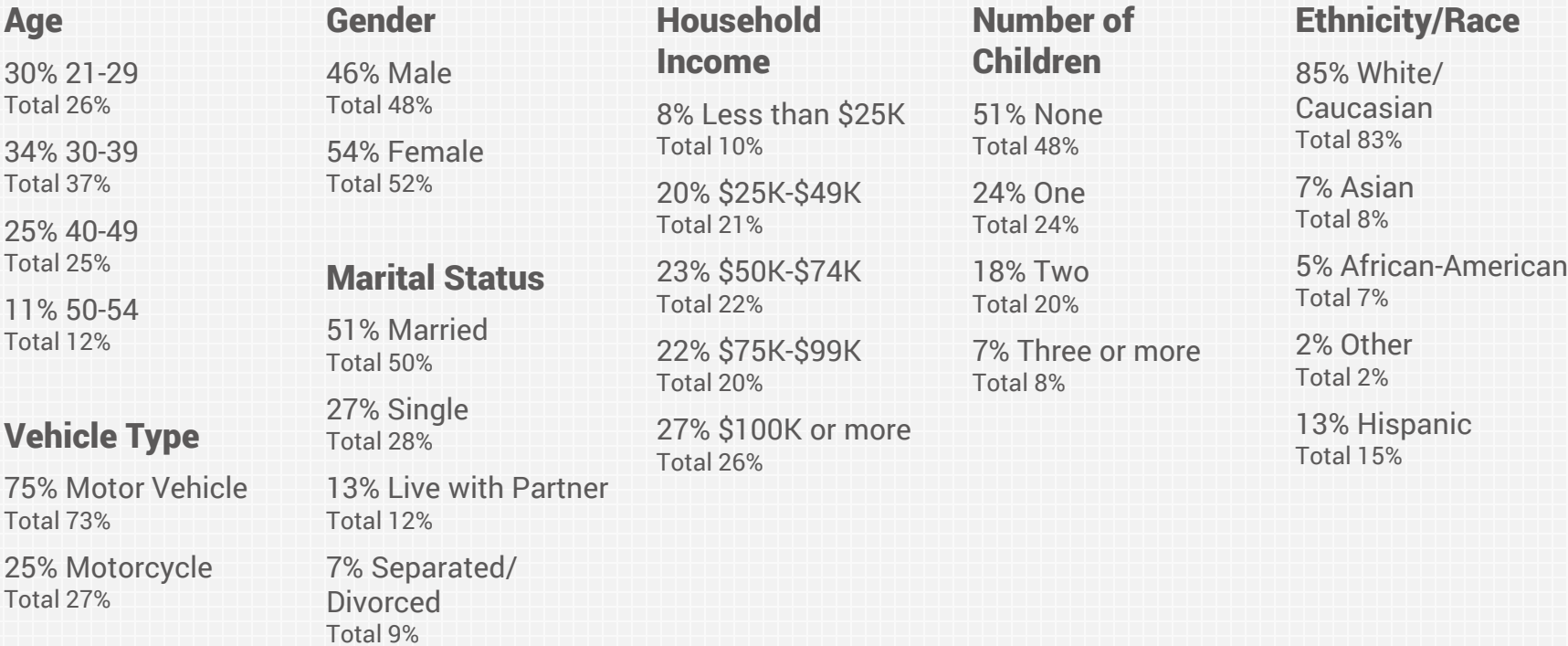
“Once is all it takes.”

- **Praise positive behaviors**
- **Reinforce the danger of a single mistake**

Though Occasional Over-Indulgers are not at immediate risk of driving under the influence, they are still capable of slipping occasionally. Consider messaging to Occasional Over-Indulgers that praises positive behaviors, while emphasizing that no matter how proactive they are on a regular basis, it takes one poor decision to have dire consequences.



Occasional Over-Indulgers Demographics



Created for:



NHTSA