

Project Zero Phase One: Social Marketing Research Report Executive Summary

Prepared by:



Funding partners:



*Friends of the Colorado
Avalanche Information Center*



**Colorado Avalanche
Information Center**



canadianavalanchecentre



**Northwest
Avalanche
Center**

Project Zero launched, winter 2013-14.

The Coalition Forms – Driven by a shared vision *to reduce avalanche fatalities*, recognizing that effective public safety campaigns require collaboration, leading American and Canadian organizations bound together in this first-of-a-kind initiative. Historically, avalanche educators, forecast centers, ski areas and manufacturers each delivered individual safety messages, collectively offering well-meaning but uncoordinated advice. Project Zero, will leverage resources in a consolidated cross-industry campaign.

Built on Research – Avalanche safety campaigns have largely shared the ideas of avalanche experts. For the backcountry novice, these same messages often prove ineffective in changing behaviors and beliefs. During the winter of 2013-14, Project Zero analyzed how to make lasting impacts with one significant user group, skiers and riders accessing the backcountry from ski areas. Focus groups conducted in early 2014 unveiled:

- **Who are these resort-accessed or “sidecountry” riders?**
 - They identify themselves as “sidecountry” riders, but not necessarily as backcountry.
 - They perceive leaving a resort boundary as less risky than riding in more remote terrain.
 - Their peers carry significant weight in deciding where and how to ride, more so than the guidance of avalanche experts they perceive as authority figures.
- **What change do we hope to make?**
 - Belief objectives: They want to be safe, but often underestimate the risks, particularly until they have a personal connection to an accident.
 - Behavior objectives: we need to clearly define what it means to “do everything right” in relation to safe backcountry travel – these perceptions vary widely and often lead to taking fewer precautions that represent the consensus on the minimum actions necessary.
 - Knowledge objectives: we can help this user group access and apply the forecast resources more effectively.
- **How is this change possible?**
 - Place: Social media is critical.
 - Messengers: Peer-to-peer influence and modeling by athletes will catch their attention.
 - Barriers: Perception of risk is often inaccurate as do perceptions of a safe process.
 - Motivations: They will believe it and do it when their friends do first.
 - Promotion: Stories of doing it right, videos, posts etc... aligned around a safety message embraced by their friends and role models will be better received than expert advice.

Read the complete report by Kruse Consulting: [download here](#)

The Opportunity – For the 2014-15 season, Project Zero will develop a North American avalanche safety campaign, including messages and delivery strategy. [Read the Phase Two proposal here.](#)

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