

# TOBACCO ADVERTISING, PROMOTION AND SPONSORSHIP

## Evidence of the Impact of Tobacco Marketing on Tobacco Use

The tobacco industry engages in a comprehensive marketing strategy to create the impression that tobacco use is widespread and acceptable. Its marketing messages attach desirable qualities such as popularity, glamour, and sex appeal with its use and understate the health risks.<sup>2</sup> The goals of consumer-oriented tobacco marketing strategies are:<sup>3,4</sup>

- To recruit new tobacco users to replace those who have quit or died.
- To maintain or increase use among current user.
- To reduce a tobacco user's willingness to quit.
- To encourage former users to start using tobacco again.

### Tobacco Marketing Attracts New Tobacco Users

Tobacco companies must attract a new generation of tobacco users to replace those who have quit or died. To accomplish this, tobacco companies develop massive marketing campaigns to entice youth to smoke and become long-term smokers.<sup>5</sup> Tobacco marketing, which includes advertising, promotion and sponsorship, has been shown to increase youth initiation of smoking.<sup>6</sup>

- A 2003 review of nine longitudinal studies involving more than 12,000 youth concluded that tobacco advertising and promotion increase the likelihood that adolescents will start to smoke.<sup>7</sup>
- A study in the United Kingdom conducted between 1999 and 2004 found that, for each form of tobacco marketing that youth recognized, the likelihood of smoking initiation increased by 7%.<sup>8</sup>
- A 2004 study found that familiarity with local tobacco billboards increased the likelihood of smoking initiation among 13 to 14 year olds in Spain.<sup>9</sup>
- A study in the United States found that advertising in stores increased the likelihood of smoking initiation, while the availability of sales promotions increased the likelihood that youth would move from experimentation to regular use.<sup>10</sup>

**“The cigarette industry has been artfully maintaining that cigarette advertising has nothing to do with total sales. This is complete and utter nonsense. The industry knows it is nonsense. I am always amused by the suggestion that advertising, a function that has been shown to increase consumption of virtually every other product, somehow miraculously fails to work for tobacco products.”**

—Emerson Foote, former CEO of McCann-Erickson, a global advertising agency that has handled millions of dollars in tobacco industry accounts.<sup>1</sup>



*Sports sponsorship, Indonesia*

### Tobacco Marketing Maintains or Increases Use among Current Tobacco Users

Tobacco advertising and tobacco imagery act as smoking cues for current smokers.

- Studies show smokers of all ages have an increased desire to smoke when presented with smoking-related images, such as someone smoking or a cigarette pack, or other items associated with smoking. Tobacco advertising contains many of these types of images.<sup>11,12</sup>
- Tobacco companies have defrauded smokers regarding the benefits of light or low tar cigarettes by marketing the cigarettes as healthier than regular cigarettes. Smokers of “light” and “low-tar” cigarettes increase the number of cigarettes smoked in a day, take larger puffs, puff more frequently, inhale more deeply, or block cigarette ventilation holes – all to maintain the level of nicotine intake necessary to sustain their addiction.<sup>13</sup> Global sales of “light” and “low-tar” cigarettes increased dramatically from 388 billion cigarettes sold in 2000 to nearly 500 billion sold in 2005, illustrating the success of the tobacco industry’s deceptive marketing techniques.<sup>14</sup>

### Tobacco Marketing Reduces Quit Attempts

Tobacco companies deter quit attempts by developing and marketing products that appear to be less addictive or more socially acceptable.<sup>15</sup> Exposure to pro-smoking messages provides unwarranted reassurance and weakens a smoker’s resolve to quit.<sup>16</sup>

- To deter health-conscious and socially-conscious smokers from quitting, tobacco companies associate their products with strength, athleticism, and social acceptability, among other desirable qualities.<sup>17</sup>
- Research among adults indicates that pack displays at the point-of-sale stimulate impulse purchases among smokers and those who are trying to quit. Australian researchers found that individuals who describe themselves as trying to quit or having recently quit avoid certain stores where point-of-sale displays are particularly prominent.<sup>18</sup>



El fumar es perjudicial para la salud  
*Promotion, Argentina*



*Promotion, Malaysia*



*Music promotion, Indonesia*

### Tobacco Marketing Encourages Former Tobacco Users to Relapse

The majority of smokers who attempt to quit relapse within a week.<sup>19</sup> Tobacco-related images, such as those found in tobacco marketing, induce tobacco cravings and result in relapse to tobacco use.<sup>20</sup>

- Smokers who pay more attention to smoking-related cues are significantly more likely to relapse in the short-term than those less inclined to notice them.<sup>21</sup>
- Research conducted by the tobacco industry discovered that the majority of “quitters” were young people. As potential “life-long customers,” young adults have been targeted by tobacco companies attempting to encourage former smokers to relapse.<sup>22</sup>



Cigarette girls, Indonesia

### Comprehensive Bans on Tobacco Advertising, Promotion and Sponsorship Reduce Tobacco Use

A comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship is one of the most effective policy measures to reduce tobacco use.<sup>23</sup> The World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) is the world’s first global public health treaty. It establishes a policy framework aimed to reduce the devastating health and economic impacts of tobacco.<sup>24</sup> Parties to the FCTC are required to implement and enforce a comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship within five years of ratifying the FCTC.<sup>25</sup>

### Key Messages

- The tobacco industry engages in a comprehensive marketing strategy to create the impression that tobacco use is widespread, socially acceptable, and glamorous.
- Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship encourage people, especially youth, to start using tobacco, encourage tobacco users to consume more, decrease motivation to quit, and encourage quitters to relapse.
- A comprehensive ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship reduces tobacco use; partial bans have more limited effect on tobacco consumption.
- Parties to the FCTC are required to implement comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorships within five years of ratifying the FCTC as a part of an effective set of tobacco control policies.



Cigarette vending machine, Japan



Cigarette disco video, Argentina

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