

Tobacco Advertising & Youth Marketing Tactics

page 1/2

“They got lips? We want them.” – RJ Reynolds Sales Representative¹

Tobacco companies develop carefully calculated media campaigns to recruit new youth smokers. Internal industry documents show that the tobacco companies have perceived kids as young as 13 years of age as a key market, studied the smoking habits of kids, and developed products and marketing campaigns aimed directly at them.²

Specific Marketing Tactics

Point-of-Sale (POS) – Advertising displays where tobacco products are sold.

“Eye Level is Buy Level’ because items placed at eye level are more likely to be purchased than those on higher or lower shelves.” —British American Tobacco (BAT), undated³

- POS cigarette advertising increases the likelihood that youth will initiate smoking.⁴
- POS exposes all shoppers, regardless of age and smoking status, to pro-smoking messages and imagery.⁵

Sports Sponsorship

*“We use sports as an avenue for advertising our products... We can go into an area where we’re marketing an event, measure the sales during the event and measure sales after the event, and see an increase in sales.”
—Wayne Robertson, RJ Reynolds, 1983⁶*

- Sports sponsorship creates false perceptions about athletic excellence and smoking, especially among youth.^{7, 8}

Brand-Stretching – Using tobacco brand names, logos, or visual brand identities on non-tobacco products, activities, or events.

“Opportunities should be explored by all companies so as to find non-tobacco products and other services which can be used to communicate the brand or house name, together with their essential visual identities...to ensure that cigarette lines can be effectively publicized when all direct forms of communication are denied.” —BAT, 1979⁹

- Non-tobacco products, such as clothing or toys, affixed with tobacco brand names promote the tobacco product and increase brand recognition, allowing tobacco companies to circumvent traditional tobacco marketing bans.



Mother and child at tobacco kiosk (Russia, 2007)



Marlboro racing sponsorship



Child in Marlboro sweatshirt (Senegal, 1998)

Industry Sponsored Youth Prevention Programs

“Our objective is to communicate that the tobacco industry is not interested in having young people smoke and to position the industry as a ‘concerned corporate citizen’ in an effort to ward off further attacks by the anti-tobacco movement.”
—BAT, 1993¹⁰

- Industry-sponsored youth prevention programs are created to improve the tobacco industry’s public image and discourage further tobacco control legislation.¹¹
- These programs are ineffective at best and, at worst, encourage youth to smoke.^{12,13,14}



Industry-sponsored Youth Prevention Program poster (Ukraine, 2001)

A Comprehensive Ban on Tobacco Advertising, Promotion and Sponsorship is Necessary to Reduce Tobacco Use among Youth

- Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship entice young people to use tobacco, encourage smokers to smoke more, and decrease smokers’ motivation to quit.^{15, 16, 17}
- Bans must address traditional and new covert forms of marketing in order to be effective.¹⁸
- Only a comprehensive and enforced ban on advertising, promotions and sponsorships reduces tobacco use, especially among youth.^{19, 20}
- Countries must adhere to Article 13 of the FCTC and adopt comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.

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