



ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

Tobacco addiction is a communicated disease – communicated through advertising, sports, marketing and sponsorship. Tobacco advertising bans protect people, especially the young. Lured in large numbers by the glare and glamour of tobacco marketing that sells a deadly product as the taste of freedom and fashion, between 80,000 and 99,000 children and adolescents in the world take to tobacco every day.

— World Health Organization¹

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 accounts²

With millions of their customers either dying from tobacco-related illnesses or quitting each year, it is crucial for the financial health of the tobacco industry to keep recruiting new smokers. Since studies show that the majority of smokers begin before the age of 18, the logic of the industry dictates that it must somehow reach young people.³

Each year, the tobacco industry spends billions of dollars around the globe on advertising, promotions, sponsorships and other forms of promotion. Industry documents reveal that the companies have carefully studied the habits, tastes and desires of their potential customers and then used that research to develop products and marketing campaigns aimed at them.^{4, 5}

Despite industry denials, the overwhelming majority of independent, peer-reviewed studies show that tobacco advertising leads to an increase in consumption.^{6, 7, 8, 9, 10} Tobacco advertising also has a powerful effect on young people. Studies have shown that tobacco promotional activities are causally related to the onset of smoking in adolescents and that exposure to cigarette advertising is predictive of smoking among adolescents. Research has also shown that following the introduction of brand advertisements that appeal to young people, the prevalence of use of those brands, and even the prevalence of smoking altogether, increases.^{11, 12, 13, 14, 15}

Tobacco Advertising Increases Consumption

There is compelling evidence that much of tobacco industry advertising and promotion is directed at children and successfully recruits new tobacco users. The evidence that tobacco advertising and promotion increases tobacco use is solid and extensive, as the following examples illustrate.

- A 2002 monograph by the US National Cancer Institute (NCI), which reviewed the research on tobacco advertising and promotion and its impact on youth smoking, found that tobacco

advertising and promotional activities are important catalysts in the smoking initiation process. The NCI report also found, based on a review of existing research, that “the conclusion that there is a causal relationship between tobacco marketing and smoking initiation seems unassailable.”¹⁶

- According to the US Surgeon General, tobacco advertising increases consumption by encouraging children or young adults to experiment with tobacco; by encouraging smokers to increase consumption; by reducing smokers’ motivation to quit; by encouraging former smokers to resume smoking; and by creating an environment in which tobacco use is seen as familiar and acceptable.¹⁷
- An analysis of 48 econometric studies found that tobacco advertising significantly increased tobacco sales.¹⁸ Recent reviews by the US Institute of Medicine,¹⁹ the US Department of Health and Human Services,²⁰ and the World Health Organization²¹ reached the same conclusion.
- Following the introduction of brand advertisements that appeal to young people, the prevalence of use of those brands, and even the prevalence of smoking altogether, increased. Between 1989 and 1993, when advertising for the new Joe Camel campaign jumped from \$27 million to \$43 million in the United States, Camel’s share among youth increased by more than 50 percent, while its adult market share did not change at all.¹⁵
- A longitudinal study of teenagers in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* showed that tobacco industry promotional activities influenced previously non-susceptible non-smokers to become susceptible to or experiment with smoking.²²
- A study in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* found that teenagers are more likely to be influenced to smoke by cigarette advertising than they are by peer pressure.¹³

Advertising Bans Reduce Tobacco Use

Both the World Health Organization and the World Bank recommend that countries prohibit all forms of tobacco advertising and promotion. A number of countries have banned all forms of tobacco advertising, while others are instituting tough restrictions. Finland, France, India, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal, Singapore and Thailand, among others, have banned all tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.²³ Such bans, if adopted globally, could substantially reduce tobacco consumption.

The scientific evidence on the effectiveness of advertising bans in reducing consumption is robust.

- In four countries where advertising bans have been introduced as part of a comprehensive tobacco control policy (Finland, France, New Zealand and Norway), a study has shown that per capita consumption of cigarettes declined between 14 and 37 percent after the implementation of the ad ban. Smoking prevalence among young people declined in three of the four countries and remained stable in the fourth.²⁴

- A 2004 study indicates that the comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising on billboards, magazines, newspapers, direct mail and the Internet in the United Kingdom in 2003 appears to be working. Smokers who noticed less advertising and promotion were one and a half times more likely to attempt to quit.²⁵
- A study commissioned by the New Zealand government examined trends in consumption and advertising in 33 countries between 1970 and 1986. The study found that the higher the level of governmental control on tobacco advertising and sponsorship, the larger the annual reduction of tobacco consumption.²⁶ A study of 22 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries reached similar conclusions.²⁷
- A study in the British Journal of Addiction concluded that tobacco consumption can be reduced by as much as six percent when a comprehensive advertising ban and an intensive public education campaign on smoking is implemented.²⁷ A 1998 report by the World Bank supports this conclusion.²⁸

Partial Advertising Bans Do Not Work

An international review of the effect of tobacco advertising bans on tobacco consumption concluded that “a comprehensive set of tobacco advertising bans can reduce tobacco consumption but a limited set of advertising bans will have little or no effect.” This 2000 study examined data from 102 countries and found that partial bans were ineffective in reducing tobacco consumption. Per capita cigarette consumption in countries with comprehensive bans declined by about eight percent while consumption rates in countries without such bans declined by only about one percent. Furthermore, the rate of decline in smoking was much steeper in those countries with relatively comprehensive bans.²⁹

Partial advertising bans do not work because tobacco companies respond to partial bans by shifting their advertising expenditures to non-restricted media, with little or no effect on overall consumption. The tobacco industry has become adept at finding creative new ways to promote, reinforce or maintain the impact of their brand names, especially with young people. Such “indirect advertising” methods include:

Sports Sponsorship: The tobacco companies link their products with health and athletic prowess, and reach a large number of young people, by sponsoring sporting events and teams.

Promotional Items: Tobacco companies put their cigarette logos on t-shirts, hats, backpacks and other consumer items popular with children. Such practices circumvent advertising restrictions and turn the wearers into walking billboards.

Brand-Stretching: Tobacco companies are now moving beyond traditional promotional items to the marketing of other products with a shared brand name, such as Marlboro Classics clothing, Salem Power Station music stores and Benson & Hedges coffees and coffee shops. These new marketing ventures are designed to keep promoting tobacco brand names even when tobacco advertising is banned.³⁰

Samples: In many countries, the companies give away free samples in areas where young people gather, such as at shopping malls, rock concerts and discos. Giving away an addictive product costs them little, and ensures them a steady stream of new customers.

Entertainment: The tobacco industry sponsors discos, rock concerts and other events popular with young people, and has encouraged the positive portrayal of smoking in movies. They have also begun to rely on global satellite, cable and Internet advertising to circumvent national ad bans.³¹

Tobacco Companies Will Fiercely Resist Attempts to Restrict Advertising

The tobacco industry will lobby hard to defeat efforts to restrict advertising:

- In Argentina, for example, Philip Morris defeated a government effort to ban tobacco advertising and promotion by secretly orchestrating a campaign by advertising agencies and sports figures.³²
- In annulling the EC Directive on tobacco advertising and sponsorship, the tobacco industry focused on lobbying government officials and industrial groups within a number of key EC member states and engaged in a number of practices to conceal its role in such activities.³³
- To undercut political support for strong marketing restrictions, tobacco companies will often offer to adopt voluntary codes of conduct which appear to offer significant concessions. However, these proposals are usually designed for public relations purposes, are rarely followed, and, once political pressure is reduced, are quickly ignored.^{34, 35}

Tobacco Industry Arguments Against Advertising Restrictions

The tobacco industry often invokes its right to “freedom of speech”, arguing that any product that is legal to sell should be legal to advertise. Yet in most countries there are numerous precedents for prohibiting the promotion of certain harmful products. Around the world, governments have regularly banned or restricted advertising for other legal products, such as pharmaceuticals or alcohol.³⁶

Tobacco companies also claim that the only aim of indirect advertising or “brand identification” advertising is to promote non-tobacco products and not tobacco products. Yet internal tobacco industry documents indicate that indirect tobacco advertising, while not specifically mentioning the tobacco product, tries to circumvent a tobacco advertising ban or restriction by using brand names, trade names, trade marks, emblems or other distinctive features of tobacco products with the aim or the indirect effect of promoting a tobacco product.³⁷

Implementing the FCTC

Article 13 of the FCTC on advertising begins with the following declarative statement: “Parties recognize that a comprehensive ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship would reduce the consumption of tobacco products.” This, combined with the accumulating evidence that partial

bans are ineffective, should cause regulators to push for comprehensive ad bans. The FCTC requires ratifying countries to:

- Undertake a comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship within five years of ratifying the treaty. The ban must include cross-border advertising originating within a Party's territory.
- Countries unable to enact a comprehensive ban due to constitutional constraints are required to restrict advertising, promotion and sponsorship, including cross-border advertising, in a manner consistent with their constitutional principles.

All Parties are obliged to, at a minimum:

- Prohibit all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship that promote a tobacco product by any means that are false, misleading or deceptive or likely to create an erroneous impression about its characteristics, health effects, hazards or emissions;
- Require that health or other appropriate warnings or messages accompany all tobacco advertising and, as appropriate, promotion and sponsorship.
- Restrict the use of direct or indirect incentives that encourage the purchase of tobacco products by the public.
- Require the disclosure of expenditures by the tobacco industry on advertising, promotion and sponsorship not yet prohibited.
- Consider a protocol to elaborate on the cross-border provisions, for example the technical and legal aspects of preventing or blocking advertising on the Internet and satellite television.

Parties also have the right to ban cross-border tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship entering their territory. In order to comply with their obligations under the FCTC, countries will need to make sure that their legislation applies effectively to new and emerging technologies.

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

Resources on the Web:

ASH UK - A good set of links on tobacco advertising and sponsorship:

http://www.newash.org.uk/ash_fd8rbkbn.htm

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids - Tobacco Advertising Gallery

<http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/adgallery/>

Tobacco.org - Ad Gallery

<http://www.tobacco.org/ads/>

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