

CAMPAIGN For TOBACCO-FREE Kids®

TOBACCO COMPANY MARKETING TO KIDS

The major cigarette companies, alone, spend over \$5.6 billion each year (or more than \$15.5 million every day) to promote their products; and many of their marketing efforts directly reach kids.¹ Tobacco industry documents, research on the effect of marketing to kids, and the opinions of advertising experts combine to reveal the intent and the success of the industry's efforts to attract new smokers from the ranks of children.

TOBACCO INDUSTRY STATEMENTS

Numerous internal tobacco industry documents, revealed in the various tobacco lawsuits, make clear that the industry has 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 at them. The following are just a few examples:

“Evidence is now available to indicate that the 14-18 year old group is an increasing segment of the smoking population. RJR-T must soon establish a successful new brand in this market if our position in the industry is to be maintained in the long term.”

[“Planned Assumptions and Forecast for the Period 1977-1986” for RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company, March 15, 1976.]

“This young adult market, the 14-24 group,...represent[s] tomorrow’s cigarette business. As this 14-24 age group matures, they will account for a key share of the total cigarette volume – for at least the next 25 years.” [Presentation from C.A. Tucker, Vice President of Marketing, to the Board of Directors of RJR Industries, September 30, 1974.]

“To ensure increased and longer-term growth for the Camel Filter, the brand must increase its share penetration among the 14-24 age group which have a new set of more liberal values and which represent tomorrow’s cigarette business.” [1975 Memo to C.A. Tucker, Vice President for Marketing, RJR.]

“Cherry Skoal is for somebody who likes the taste of candy, if you know what I’m saying.” [Former UST sales representative, quoted in a 1994 Wall Street Journal article.]

“Today’s teenager is tomorrow’s potential regular customer, and the overwhelming majority of smokers first begin to smoke while still in their teens ... The smoking patterns of teenagers are particularly important to Philip Morris.” [1981 Philip Morris internal document.]

Although the cigarette companies now claim that they no longer market to kids or target youths in their research or promotional efforts, they continue to advertise cigarettes in ways that reach vulnerable underage populations. Among other things, the companies continue to advertise in magazines with large youth readerships – despite being able to reach adult smokers through less kid-heavy publications. In addition, the companies continue to advertise at retail outlets near schools and playgrounds, with large ads and signs clearly visible from outside the stores.

At the same time, the companies vigorously oppose reasonable efforts to make it more difficult for kids to obtain cigarettes -- such as eliminating cigarette vending machine sales in locations

accessible by children, requiring that tobacco products be sold from behind the counter, forbidding sales of single cigarettes or “kiddie packs” (cigarette packs of fewer than 20 cigarettes), or prohibiting sales of cigarettes by the internet or through the mail.

In fact, the cigarette companies are addicted to underage smoking. Almost 90 percent of all regular smokers beginning at or before age 18, and hardly anybody tries their first cigarette outside of childhood.² In other words, if kids stopped smoking, the cigarette companies market of smokers would soon shrink away to almost nothing. But thanks, in large part, to cigarette company marketing efforts, each day, roughly 6,000 kids try smoking for the first time and another 3,000 kids become regular daily smokers.³

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

Beyond the industry’s own statements, there is compelling evidence that much of their advertising and promotion is directed at kids and successfully recruits new tobacco users to years of addiction:

- Eighty-six percent of kids who smoke (but only about a third of adults) prefer Marlboro, Camel and Newport – the three most heavily advertised brands. Marlboro, the most heavily advertised brand, controls almost 60 percent of the youth market but only about 25 percent of the adult market.⁴
- A study published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* found that teens are more likely to be influenced to smoke by cigarette advertising than they are by peer pressure.⁵
- A study in the *Journal of Marketing* found that teenagers are three times as sensitive as adults to cigarette advertising.⁶
- 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.⁷
- According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the development and marketing of “starter products” with such features as pouches and cherry flavoring have resulted in smokeless tobacco going from a product used primarily by older men to one for which young men comprise the largest portion of the market.⁸ Nearly sixteen percent of high school boys are current smokeless tobacco users.⁹
- In the early 1990’s, thirty percent of kids (12 to 17 years old), both smokers and nonsmokers, own at least one tobacco promotional item, such as T-shirts, backpacks, and CD players.¹⁰
- Between 1989 and 1993, when advertising for the new Joe Camel campaign jumped from \$27 million to \$43 million, Camel’s share among youth increased by more than 50 percent, while its adult market share did not change at all.¹¹
- A report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* documented a rapid and unprecedented increase in the smoking initiation rate of adolescent girls subsequent to the launch in the late 1960’s of women’s cigarette brands like Virginia Slims.¹²

ADVERTISING EXPERTS

Even advertising industry executives believe that tobacco marketing influences kids, and a clear majority think this is done intentionally. In December 1996, a survey of advertising industry executives revealed the following:

- 82 percent believe advertising for cigarettes and tobacco products reaches children and teenagers in significant numbers.
- 78 percent believe current tobacco advertising makes smoking more appealing or socially acceptable to kids.
- 71 percent believe that tobacco advertising changes behavior and increases smoking among kids.
- 59 percent believe that a goal of tobacco advertising is marketing cigarettes to teenagers who do not already smoke.
- 79 percent favor limitations on the style and placement of advertising for cigarette and tobacco products to minimize impact on children and teenagers.¹³

The National Center for Tobacco-Free Kids, February 7, 2000

¹ For amounts spent by the cigarette companies on marketing, see Federal Trade Commission, *Federal Trade Commission Report to Congress for 1997, Pursuant to the Federal Cigarette Labeling and Advertising Act* (1999).

² *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People: A Report of The Surgeon General, 1994*

³ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Incidence of Initiation of Cigarette Smoking – United States, 1965-1996" *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)* 47(39) (October 9, 1998).

⁴ CDC. "Changes in the Cigarette Brand Preference of Adolescent Smokers, U.S. 1989-1993," *MMWR*, (August, 1994). See, also, Johnson, L. D., et al., Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, *Cigarette Brand Preferences Among Adolescents*, Monitoring the Future Occasional Paper 45 (1999).

⁵ Evans, N., et al., "Influence of Tobacco Marketing and Exposure to Smokers on Adolescent Susceptibility to Smoking," *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* 87(20): 1538-45 (October 1995).

⁶ Pollay et al., "The Last Straw? Cigarette Advertising and Realized Market Shares Among Youth and Adults," *Journal of Marketing* 60(2):1-16 (April 1996).

⁷ Pierce, J. et al., "Tobacco Industry Promotion of Cigarettes and Adolescent Smoking," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 279(7): 511-505 (February 1998) [with erratum in *JAMA* 280(5): 422 (August 1998)].

⁸ CDC. "Surveillance for Selected Tobacco-Use Behaviors – United States, 1900-1994." *MMWR*; 43(SS-3) (November 18, 1994).

⁹ CDC, "Tobacco Use Among High School Students – United States, 1997" *MMWR* 47(12): 229-233 (April 3, 1998).

¹⁰ Gallup International Institute, "Teen-age Attitudes and Behaviors Concerning Tobacco" (September, 1992).

¹¹ CDC. "Changes in the Cigarette Brand Preference of Adolescent Smokers, U.S. 1989-1993," *MMWR*, (August, 1994).

¹² Pierce, J., L. Lee, and E.R. Gilpin, "Smoking Initiation by Adolescent Girls, 1944 Through 1988,"

JAMA, 271(8): 608-611 (1994).

¹³ Telephone survey of 300 advertising industry executives in agencies with billings of more than \$10 million, commissioned by the New York advertising firm of Shepardson, Stern, and Kaminsky (December 1996)