



# Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Fact Sheet

- Despite the overwhelming evidence of the adverse health effects from tobacco use, efforts to prevent the onset or continuance of tobacco use face the pervasive challenge of promotion activity by the tobacco industry.<sup>1</sup>
- Regulating advertising and promotion, particularly that directed at young people, is very likely to reduce both the prevalence and initiation of smoking.<sup>1</sup>
- The tobacco industry uses a variety of marketing tools and strategies to influence consumer preference, thereby increasing market share and attracting new consumers.<sup>1</sup>
- Among all U.S. manufacturers, the tobacco industry is one of the most intense in marketing its products. Only the automobile industry markets its products more heavily.<sup>1</sup>
- In 1998 tobacco companies spent nearly \$7 billion — or more than \$18 million a day — to advertise and promote cigarettes. In recent years, these marketing dollars pay for activities that may have special appeal to young people.<sup>2</sup>
- Children and teenagers constitute the majority of all new smokers, and the industry's advertising and promotion campaigns often have special appeal to these young people.<sup>1</sup>
- One tobacco company, the Liggett Group, Inc., has admitted that the entire tobacco industry conspired to market cigarettes to children.<sup>1</sup>
- Tobacco documents recently obtained in litigation indicate that tobacco companies have purposefully marketed to children as young as 14 years of age.<sup>1,4</sup>
- About 85% of adolescent smokers who buy their own cigarettes buy either Marlboro, Newport, or Camel — the three most heavily advertised brands of cigarettes in the United States.<sup>3</sup>
- The effect of tobacco advertising on young people is best epitomized by R.J. Reynolds Company's introduction of the Joe Camel campaign. From the introduction of the "Old Joe" cartoon character in 1988, Camel's share of the adolescent cigarette market increased dramatically — from less than 1% before 1988, to 8% in 1989, to more than 13% in 1993.<sup>1,4</sup>
- In 1997 the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) filed a complaint against R.J. Reynolds alleging that "the purpose of the Joe Camel campaign was to reposition the Camel brand to make it attractive to young smokers...." The FTC ultimately dismissed its complaint after the November 23, 1998, Master Settlement Agreement (MSA), which calls for the ban of all cartoon characters, including Joe Camel, in the advertising, promotion, packaging, and labeling of any tobacco product.<sup>1</sup>
- The MSA prohibits a number of promotional activities such as banning brand name sponsorship of events with a significant youth audience; the use of tobacco brand names in stadiums and arenas; payments to promote tobacco products in movies, television shows, theater productions or live performances, videos and video games; all transit and outdoor advertising; and specialty items bearing product names and logos.
- The greatest growth of tobacco advertising aimed at women followed the introduction of Virginia Slims in 1968 with its slogan "You've Come a Long Way, Baby!" Since then, there has been an increasing number of cigarette brands and advertising campaigns targeted toward women.<sup>5</sup>
- In 1997 Woman Thing Music, a new record company owned by Philip Morris Tobacco Company, offered unsigned female music artists lucrative recording contracts and an opportunity to be featured on a new CD. This CD, targeted toward young women, was available only with the purchase of two packs of Virginia Slims cigarettes. Outraged by this promotion, the celebrity artists organized a counter-music campaign, Virginia SLAM.<sup>6</sup>
- In December 1999 Philip Morris launched a new \$40 million campaign targeting women, particularly minority women, with the slogan "Find Your Own Voice." The ads have been featured in a variety of publications such as *Glamour*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *People*, and *Essence*. In response to this ad campaign, several women's groups, led by the American Medical Women's Association and the National Coalition FOR Women AGAINST Tobacco, joined together on a campaign to counter the tobacco industry's targeting of women.<sup>7,8</sup>

- Many public health and smoking prevention groups are concerned about the tobacco industry's practice of targeting cultural and ethnic minorities through product development, packaging, pricing, advertising, and promotional activities.<sup>1</sup>
- A one-year study found that three major African American publications — *Ebony*, *Jet*, and *Essence* — received proportionately higher profits from cigarette advertisements than did other magazines.<sup>8</sup>
- Tobacco products are advertised and promoted disproportionately in racial/ethnic minority communities. Examples of targeted promotions include the introduction of cigarette products with the brand names “Rio” and “Dorado” that were advertised and marketed at different times to the Hispanic community.<sup>8</sup>
- Studies have found a higher density of tobacco billboards in racial/ethnic minority communities. For example, a 1993 study in San Diego, California, found that the highest proportion of tobacco billboards were posted in Asian American communities and the lowest proportion were in white communities.<sup>8</sup>
- The tobacco industry commonly uses cultural symbols and designs to target racial/ethnic populations. American Spirit cigarettes were promoted as “natural” cigarettes; the package featured an American Indian smoking a pipe. In addition, certain tobacco product advertisements have used visual images, such as American Indian warriors, to target their products.<sup>8</sup>

## REFERENCES

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