KILLER FANTASY

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KILLER FANTASY

For years, the tobacco industry has promoted a richer, more glamorous life through smoking. Big tobacco uses cool DJs, hot girls and strong cowboys to hook our young people on a product that kills 1 in 3 smokers. Sadly, Big Tobacco recruits 4,200 new youth smokers each year.

The deadly trend is anything but new. Over the last hundred years, the tobacco industry has exerted a growing influence in the United States. Peddling an addictive product, tobacco companies have amassed hundreds of billions of dollars in profits at the expense of public health, lost lives, broken families and untold sorrow. Slowly, the tide is turning. In communities throughout America, organizations and government entities are ratcheting up their battle against tobacco.

In this booklet, you'll find useful information about the tobacco industry and the tactics it uses to perpetuate its multibillion-dollar global empire. By understanding how tobacco companies market their deadly products, you'll be better prepared to fight their lies and deception. For additional information about cessation and prevention programs, visit StopsWithMe.com.

"Tobacco use is a social phenomenon largely propelled by mass media over the last century, led by tobacco industry professionals who constantly change strategies to reach their goals."

Dr. Tim Johnson, ABC News Medical Editor, August 2008

TOBACCO INDUSTRY TACTICS
THEN AND NOW

Stretching all the way back to the founding of the United States, tobacco has played a prominent role throughout American history. Before the arrival of European settlers, Native Americans used tobacco in religious practices.[1] Early American farmers adopted tobacco as a lucrative staple crop, and the U.S. Capitol building even has tobacco leaves carved into its columns.[2]

Over the last century, tobacco has evolved into a multibillion-dollar business fueled by an ever-changing arsenal of marketing activities. Tobacco companies have used every trick in the book – from free giveaways to physician endorsements to promises of magical weight loss – to hook the American public on their products.

Here are just a few of the tactics the industry has used:

Targeting Soldiers

- During WWI, WWII, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, U.S. soldiers received free cigarettes, often as part of their rations. Soldiers who survived these conflicts were left to deal with tobacco-related addiction and disease.[3]

- Despite a Department of Defense ban on the practice, U.S. military personnel continued to receive free tobacco products during Middle Eastern conflicts during the 1990s and 2000s.[4]

Targeting Women

- In the 1930s, cigarettes were marketed as appetite suppressants using slogans such as "Reach for a Lucky Instead of a Sweet." The message was clear – cigarettes contribute to a positive body image for women[5].

- During the 1920s and 1960s, tobacco companies co-opted the women's rights movement.[6,7] They embedded themselves in freedom demonstrations and even created cigarettes designed solely for women. Virginia Slims, among others, are still popular with female customers to this day. As a result, between 1960 and 1990 lung cancer deaths among women increased by more than 400 percent – exceeding breast cancer deaths.[8]

Physician Endorsements

- To counter growing concerns about tobacco-related disease, the industry hired doctors and dentists to endorse their products. Using slogans like "Just What the Doctor Ordered," and "More Doctors Smoke Camels," tobacco companies attempted to quell public health concerns by showing physicians were also smokers.[9]

Celebrity Endorsements and Cultural Icons

- In the 1930s and 1940s, tobacco companies used A-list movie stars to endorse certain brands of cigarettes. Later, cultural icons such as the Marlboro Man lured men with exaggerated fantasies of manliness and independence. Smokeless tobacco companies have used professional athletes to market their products. In a more recent trend, cigar companies have invaded hip hop culture to promote their deadly products, especially targeting African Americans and youth. These tactics created a glamorized self-image in the minds of smokers, and tied that self-image directly to the use of tobacco.[10]

Embedding Tobacco in Popular Culture

- Starting in the 1940s, tobacco companies began crafting lucrative deals to have their products featured in movies. Product placement and TV commercials soon became a favored industry tactic as well.[11]

- Today, tobacco companies pay to have their cigarettes featured in popular video games.

AS AMERICAN AS APPLE PIE

Throughout the tobacco industry's checkered history, one theme has remained constant. Whether marketing itself as a symbol of independence or embedding its product in popular culture, the tobacco industry has sought to portray itself as an embodiment of American culture. Promoting the values of freedom and self-determination, the tobacco industry has successfully positioned itself as a uniquely American phenomenon.

The industry uses websites such as Citizens for Tobacco Rights to fight public health campaigns and taxation of tobacco products. This website is sponsored by Phillip Morris USA and U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Company among others.

Today, public health and wellness campaigns are beginning to chip away at more than a century's worth of deceptive and manipulative marketing tactics. As regulation and public education erode tobacco's popularity in the United States, tobacco companies have pursued a global strategy. According to the World Health Organization, unless current trends can be reversed, tobacco will likely kill more than a billion people in the 21st Century. By working at the local, state and national levels, citizens and public health workers can educate the public about tobacco's dangers and lessen the impact of this global health pandemic.

SAMPLING
AND SPONSORSHIPS

In the movies, drug dealers give away free samples in order to get users hooked. In real life, tobacco companies pursue this very strategy to transform young adults into lifelong tobacco users. The industry also uses aggressive sponsorship campaigns to glamorize its deadly product. Let's take a look at the tactics and key terms related to this core industry strategy.

FUBYAs – If there's one thing the tobacco industry never skimps on, it's market research. After decades of studying young adults age 21 and under, tobacco companies have learned that young adult smokers tend to stick with the first brand of cigarettes they smoke regularly. "First Usual Brand, Young Adult Smokers" or "FUBYAs" are the subject of intense marketing efforts by the tobacco industry.[1]

Cigarette Fairies – Cigarette Fairies are attractive young adults hired to promote tobacco at bars, clubs and events. Their job is to collect personal information from potential customers by scanning driver's licenses and giving away free products to budding tobacco users. Once the personal information has been collected, tobacco companies aggressively market through the mail with other contests, giveaways, and gimmicks. The tactic is so effective at creating new addicts that cigarette fairies can earn an attractive living. Recently R.J. Reynolds offered new "sales representatives" $41,652 yearly plus $4,165 in bonuses, a company car and a cell phone allowance.[2]

Product Giveaways – Whether it's clubs, bars, concerts or parties, cigarette fairies are sent just about everywhere they aren't prohibited by law. They frequent bars and nightclubs in the early morning hours, and they're even known to attend fraternity parties. After infiltrating these venues, cigarette fairies give away free products to grateful young smokers who are frequently short on cash.[2]

Sponsorships – Under new regulations that went into effect in 2010, tobacco companies cannot sponsor events under the brand name of their products. However, they are still allowed to promote events under their corporate names. Spectator sports, fairs, festivals, rodeos and racing events are all favorite targets for tobacco industry sponsorships. A study by the Cancer Research Campaign found that boys are twice as likely to become regular smokers if they are racing fans.[3]

Outreach Events – In addition to attending existing events and venues, tobacco companies often sponsor their own branded events. For example, RJ Reynolds has sponsored "Girls' Night Out" events where young women receive free cigarettes, massages, hairstyling, gift bags, makeup, jewelry and other Camel-branded items.[4]

WHAT'S THE
LESSON?

From targeting our youth to infiltrating community events, tobacco companies have embedded themselves in the fabric of American life. It's all a part of their strategy to recruit new generations of addicted tobacco users. By understanding the tactics they employ to recruit new smokers, you'll be better prepared to combat the industry's influence on your community, your loved ones, your health and your life.

TOBACCO IS
TOBACCO

Despite efforts to rebrand its product, smoking alternatives contain both nicotine and disease-promoting toxins. As U.S. regulators ratchet up pressure on tobacco companies, history suggests they will find alternative methods of packaging and marketing their products. By staying aware of their marketing tactics, you can help make your community tobacco-free.

America is less accepting of smoking than it once was. Smoking bans in hospitals, airports, restaurants, bars and public spaces have helped curb the growth of smoking in the United States. Education campaigns and regulatory changes have also taken their toll on traditional cigarette smoking. As smoking continues to decline, a slew of alternative tobacco products have emerged. Among them are:

Cigars – Cigars are nothing new, but the cigars on today's convenience store shelves bear little resemblance to their predecessors. To skirt cigarette taxes designed to discourage smoking, tobacco companies have begun marketing "little cigars that resemble cigarettes."[1] These mini-cigars come in numerous flavors including grape, strawberry, apple, rum and tequila. Flavoring agents mask the unpleasant smell of tobacco, and the cigars are often placed on store shelves near candy, where their colorful packaging attracts children's attention[2].

Hookah – Hookahs are water pipes used to smoke flavored tobacco known as shisha. Shisha is often mixed with molasses and fruit flavors to mask the taste and smell of the smoke. In recent years, hookah bars have enjoyed a dramatic rise in popularity. Because hookah smoke is "filtered" through a layer of water, it is often perceived as a safer form of tobacco use. Nothing could be further from the truth. Like cigarette smoking, hookah use causes lung disease, heart disease, oral cancers and other ailments.[3]

Tobacco Pouches – Tobacco pouches contain smokeless tobacco conveniently contained in a small teabag-like sack. One such product is known as "Snus" (pronounced "snoose"). A Camel-branded product, Snus, is promoted as a nicotine-replacement product for environments unfriendly to cigarette smoking. Ads for snus promote use in airports, hotels, and at work.[4]

Orbs, Sticks and Strips – Both R.J. Reynolds and Philip Morris have developed nicotine delivery mechanisms that resemble candy. "Orbs" resemble tiny mints and come in a variety of flavors. "Sticks" resemble toothpicks, and "Strips" melt in the mouth to deliver a powerful and addictive dose of nicotine to the user.[5] These products are designed to be swallowed in order to make the use of the product more discrete.

In 2006, U.S. District Judge Gladys Kessler found tobacco companies in violation of anti-racketeering laws. Racketeering is the operation of an illegal business, typically run as part of an organized crime ring. The decision stemmed from the industry's decades-long denial that tobacco is harmful and addictive, despite the fact they possessed evidence to the contrary. Judge Kessler commented, "The evidence in this case clearly establishes that Defendants have not ceased engaging in unlawful activity... Their continuing conduct misleads consumers in order to maximize Defendants' revenues by recruiting new smokers (the majority of whom are under the age of 18), preventing current smokers from quitting, and thereby sustaining the industry[1]."

As a result of the verdict, tobacco companies paid out hundreds of billions of dollars in settlements for damages caused by their blatant deception. Perhaps even more amazing is the fact that tobacco companies are still operating after being convicted of defrauding both the federal government and a large portion of the American public. It's a testament to the power and political influence wielded by the industry.

TOBACCO: ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE?

If there's one thing to be grudgingly admired about the tobacco industry, it's the sheer tenacity of its marketing programs. Despite every effort from various regulators and government agencies, the industry keeps dreaming up new and more creative ways to peddle its deadly products. Decades after it was barred from advertising on TV, the industry is still spending upwards of $12 billion PER YEAR marketing its products in the United States.[1]

The tobacco industry's marketing resources are a marvel to behold. With unprecedented resources for market research, the industry has developed an entire science of marketing to niche minority groups. Long ago, big tobacco companies discovered that targeting tiny swaths of the population is an extremely effective means of pushing their product on the American public. Whether it's women, African Americans, teens, the LGBT community, or a host of other minority groups, the tobacco industry has a marketing plan to suit them all. Let's take a look at how tobacco companies target various minority groups.

Women – Starting in the 1920s tobacco companies began tying their product to the ideas of women's equality, freedom, and body image. In the 1960s, Virginia Slims were designed specifically for women. More recently, Camel No. 9s were released as the cigarette for "The Most Fashion-Forward Woman."[2] Cigarette companies have developed "Superslim" cigarette packs designed to fit in purses and promoted their products with a variety of handbags, jewelry and female-centric consumer items.[2]

African Americans – In the 1960s, Brown and Williamson developed the Kool brand of cigarettes specifically for the African American community[3]. The company used darker-skinned models in its advertising, which was designed to reflect the "black experience." Today, Kools and other menthols are still extremely popular among African Americans. A 2007 study found that majority-black neighborhoods had 2.6 times as many cigarette ads per capita as other neighborhoods.[4] The effort is paying off for tobacco companies. The smoking prevalence in communities of color remains much higher than that of the general population, and quitting rates are lower.[5]

LGBT Community – For years, tobacco companies have marketed sexually ambiguous and sexually coded messages to the LGBT community. They've donated to community events and organizations while sponsoring HIV/AIDS-related charities.[6] The irony couldn't be greater. Smoking weakens the immune system, making it more difficult for the body to fight AIDS-related diseases. But that hasn't stopped the tobacco companies' success in marketing to sexual minorities. LGBT individuals are 40-70 percent more likely to smoke than non-LGBT individuals.[7] And because other marketers have historically ignored the community, many LGBT individuals feel an especially strong brand loyalty to their preferred brand of cigarettes.

Children and Teens – Each year, smoking kills millions of people globally. So the tobacco industry does what any other industry would do in reaction to a shrinking market. They invest heavily to attract new customers. Even though smoking is illegal for people under 18 years of age, tobacco companies aggressively pursue this market segment. The result is that 80 to 90 percent of smokers start before turning 18.[8] Despite being aimed at "young adults" tobacco advertising is designed to fulfill the psychological needs of adolescents, including popularity, peer acceptance, and positive self-image.[9] Tobacco is marketed in exotic flavors wrapped in brightly colored packaging, a proven technique for marketing to young children. From product placement in movies and video games to donations to youth organizations, the industry relentlessly targets the most vulnerable and impressionable members of society – our young people.

TOBACCO MARKETING: A DIVERSITY OF LIES – The tobacco industry's marketing efforts are nothing short of genius. They appropriate the values, symbols, language and style of America's many subcultures and use them to market a deadly, addictive product. As we work to reduce the incidence of smoking at every level of society, it's important to see these marketing efforts for exactly what they are – a cynical attempt to infiltrate diverse communities and squeeze profits from deadly tobacco addiction.

THE STATE OF TOBACCO IN OKLAHOMA

When it comes to smoking in Oklahoma, the news isn't all bad. In 2014, the state ranked 4th in the nation in funding to prevent children from smoking and for helping smokers quit. The state currently spends $23.6 million per year on tobacco prevention and cessation programs, a number that continues to grow each year. Thanks to this investment, Oklahoma's high school smoking rate dropped from 20.2 percent in 2009 to 15.1 percent in 2013.

Unfortunately the new isn't all good. Nearly on quarter of all adults in Oklahoma (23.7%) are active smokers. Each year, smoking kills approximately 7,500 adults, and more than 4,200 children or teens become addicted to smoking. More than 241.8 million packs of cigarettes are sold in Oklahoma each year, and the eventual consequences will be severe. According to current projections, more than 88,000 Oklahoma children who are currently alive will die prematurely from smoking. While Oklahoma is a national leader in funding anti-smoking programs, the tobacco industry spends approximately $160 million per year marketing tobacco to Oklahomans, or about seven times as much as the state spends on anti-smoking efforts.

The economic impact of smoking in Oklahoma is staggering. Each year, smoking costs Oklahomans more than $1.62 billion in medical costs including $264 million in Medicaid alone. Every Oklahoma household pays an average of $926 per year in state and federal taxes to cover medical treatments caused by smoking – whether or not they smoke. Additionally, smoking results in more than $2.1 billion in lost worker productivity for Oklahoma employers. None of these figures accounts for the costs of diseases caused by secondhand smoke exposure or addiction to smokeless tobacco.

Oklahoma Tobacco Statistics at a Glance:

The Toll of Tobacco in Oklahoma	
High school students who smoke	15.1% (27,100)
Male high school students who use smokeless or spit tobacco	14% (female use is much lower)
Kids (under 18) who become new daily smokers each year	4,200
Packs of cigarettes bought or smoked by kids each year	7.7 million
Adults in Oklahoma who smoke	23.7% (688,000)

U.S. National Data (2014)	
High school smoking rate	12.7%
Male high school students who use smokeless tobacco	9.6%
Adult smoking rate	19.0%

Deaths in Oklahoma from Smoking

Adults who die each year from their own smoking	7,500
Kids now under 18 and alive in Oklahoma who will ultimately die prematurely from smoking	88,000

Smoking kills more people than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined — and thousands more die from other tobacco-related causes such as fires caused by smoking (more than 1,000 deaths/year nationwide) and smokeless tobacco use.

Smoking-Caused Monetary Costs in Oklahoma

Annual health care costs in Oklahoma directly caused by smoking	$1.62 billion
Portion covered by the state Medicaid program	$264 million
Residents' state & federal tax burden from smoking-caused government expenditures	$926 per household
Smoking-caused productivity losses in Oklahoma	$2.1 billion

Amounts do not include health costs caused by exposure to secondhand smoke, smoking-caused fires, smokeless tobacco use, or cigar and pipe smoking. Tobacco use also imposes additional costs such as workplace productivity losses and damage to property.

Tobacco Industry Influence in Oklahoma

Annual tobacco industry marketing expenditures nationwide	$8.8 billion
Estimated portion spent for Oklahoma marketing each year	$160.3 million

Published research studies have found that kids are twice as sensitive to tobacco advertising as adults and are more likely to be influenced to smoke by cigarette marketing than by peer pressure. One-third of underage experimentation with smoking is attributable to tobacco company advertising.

TOBACCO STOPS WITH ME.

StopsWithMe.com

CONCLUSION AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Understanding the industry's deceptive practices is a great starting point, but it's also important to understand the resources that exist to prevent and end tobacco use. The following resources can help you, your loved ones, and your community put an end to the destructive influence of tobacco.

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