

Issues of tobacco advertising for youth assignment

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Advertising is a marketing technique that subconsciously persuades consumers to purchase products. Advertisements are displayed through various means to a large audience. They can be found on the Internet, in a magazine, or even on the highway. Advertisements are everywhere! Their main goal is to grab the consumer's attention about a specific good, service or institution. To achieve this goal, advertisers use an assortment of techniques. However, some of the techniques used are illegal, unethical, or both. For example, the negative effect of the smoking ads on the youth.

Everyday 3, 000 children start smoking, most them between the ages of 10 and 18. These kids account for 90 percent of all new smokers. In fact, 90 percent of all adult smokers said that they first lit up as teenagers. These statistics clearly show that young people are the prime target in the tobacco wars. The cigarette manufacturers may deny it, but advertising and promotion play a vital part in making these facts a reality. The kings of these media ploys are Marlboro and Camel. Marlboro uses a fictional western character called The Marlboro Man, while Camel uses Joe Camel, a high-rolling, swinging cartoon character.

Joe Camel, the "smooth character" from R. J. Reynolds, who is shown as a dromedary with complete style has been attacked by many Tobacco-Free Kids organizations as a major influence on the children of America. Dr. Lonnie Bristow, AMA (American Medical Association) spokesman, remarks that "to kids, cute cartoon characters mean that the product is harmless, but cigarettes are not harmless. They have to know that their ads are influencing the youth under 18 to begin smoking". Researchers report that almost as many 6-year olds recognize Joe Camel as know Mickey Mouse.

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That is very shocking information for any parent to hear. The industry denies that these symbols target people under 21 and claim that their advertising goal is simply to promote brand switching and loyalty. The ads are everywhere, especially in teen-oriented magazines, such as Rolling Stone and Spin. The ads also fuel some of the reasons the children gave for starting. They represent rebellion, independence, acceptance and happiness. These are all the things a young person, between childhood and adolescence, needs and desires.

This type of advertising, on top of peer pressure, is the mystery behind the rise in adolescent smoking. Should tobacco advertising be restricted? This is a very controversial issue. There is the idea that young children that smoke started smoking because of advertisements, but there is also the idea that children start smoking for other reasons. Many big, well-known tobacco companies are being sued for their advertisements. But tobacco companies say that youth smokers are not especially valuable to the companies, so all these lawsuits are useless.

In particular a cartoon character was used to sell cigarettes to adults. Many tobacco companies use objects that would attract children, like actors and actresses and scenes in their favorite movies. Tobacco advertisers also make tobacco use seem sexy, fun, glamorous, macho and most insidiously healthful. Directors of movies put tobacco scenes in movies with some of children's favorite actors like Will Smith, Robin Williams, Tom Cruise, Matthew McConaughey, and even the famous cartoon character, Roger Rabbit. Some movies that these actors are in have had large youth box office takes.

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There are a lot of surprising statistics that make the government and the people sue big tobacco advertisers. Like the fact that tobacco is the only legal product that causes death and disability when used as intended. Cigarettes kill more than 400, 000 Americans every year, several studies have found nicotine to be addictive in ways similar to those of heroin, cocaine, and alcohol. Smokers have almost twice the risk of having coronary heart disease as nonsmokers. Smokers' risk of getting lung cancer is approximately 14 times than that of nonsmokers.

Tobacco companies spend approximately \$14 million a day on advertising. Students who own cigarette promotional items are more than four times more likely to begin smoking, compared to those who do not own these items. Eighty-six percent of people between 12 and 17-years old who smoke prefer the three most heavily advertised brands. Only about one-third of adult smokers choose these brands. Almost ninety percent of adult smokers began at or before age 18. A recent study showed that thirty-four percent of teens began smoking as a result of the tobacco company's promotional activities.

Big tobacco companies have also tried to reduce youth access to tobacco in homes and in communities. They have launched a print advertising campaign that is running in magazines nationwide to remind parents and other adults to keep their cigarettes away from kids. They are also developing an awareness campaign to remind adults that they should not be buying cigarettes for kids. R.J. Reynolds and many other big tobacco companies have the idea of adult choice. They say that although it is appropriate for governments and health authorities to encourage people to <https://assignbuster.com/issues-of-tobacco-advertising-for-youth-assignment/>

avoid risky behaviors, they do not believe that they should prohibit adults from choosing to smoke. The decision as to whether or not to smoke should be left to the individual adult. Two solutions to this problem are to restrict the advertisements to things only adults are going to see and to create new advertisements against the use of tobacco by teens. A good solution to reduce the bad effects that tobacco advertising has on children would be to restrict all tobacco ads from anything a child might be able to get their hands on.

It is a known fact that some children watch the same television as adults; the same is true for some of the magazines they read. To restrict all the television commercials that show healthy, beautiful people enjoying tobacco products would make a major difference in the visual influence that tobacco advertisers have on the younger population. To make commercials demoting the use of the tobacco and making children aware of the bad, long-term effects would be a very positive visual influence on children contemplating smoking.

Children are very easily influenced, especially through television and magazine advertisement, so if they were to have advertisements demoting tobacco use then they might actually see the truth about the danger of tobacco. The visual advertisement is a much more effective method of getting a point across. Television has restricted the commercials, but the movie industry still promotes tobacco use in today's movies. If a child sees their favorite action hero smoking they think it's cool.

They will do anything to be like them, especially today's cartoon characters. If a child reads in a magazine that his favorite wrestler smokes, that would be a major influence on him. Once again proving the visual is more powerful than the spoken word. The advantages of this solution would be that now the thirty-four percent of teens who began smoking because of the advertisements they saw will now not smoke due to the lack of advertisements. This will not eliminate the problem, but it will definitely decrease the amount of new underage smokers.

This shouldn't bother the tobacco companies because they claim that they do not direct their advertisements towards children anyway, so they would not lose any popularity or money. A lot of magazines and movie directors would be willing to eliminate the use of tobacco and tobacco ads. The problem with this solution is to get the companies to eliminate the use of tobacco ads and use. The tobacco companies pay the magazines to put their ads in their magazines a lot of money. Some magazine companies might not think that tobacco ads are that bad or the tobacco companies' money might be their main contribution, so they will not give up the ads.

And since the government cannot do anything about the magazine ads, it's totally up to the companies. Another solution to this problem would be to reinforce the bad effects of tobacco use using commercials, billboards, magazine articles, and newspaper articles. If children were constantly reminded of the bad effects of tobacco use, then they would get the picture. If every once in a while in between cartoons a commercial came on that said that 400, 000 people die every year of tobacco use, kids would have all their attention on that commercial.

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Even if in their cartoons, the characters said bad things about tobacco use and the truths of tobacco use, the children would understand, and they might think twice about smoking. If a child sees all bad things about smoking and tobacco use and no good they are definitely more likely not to smoke. The only bad thing is that the tobacco advertisers would get a bad reputation because of all the bad commercials, billboards, newspaper articles, and magazine articles. The tobacco companies might not like this and might get back at the bad advertisements by increasing their marketing spending and not decreasing it.

I believe that the tobacco companies should restrict all tobacco ads, especially from magazines, television, and movies seen mostly by children. What would need to be done would be to conduct a survey seeing which magazines children from the ages 12-17 read, which television shows they watch and who their favorite actresses and actors are. Then eliminate the ones that are least likely. It would be clear which magazine articles, television shows and which actors to eliminate tobacco use and advertisement from. This would definitely not be an easy task to accomplish, but to decrease the number of children smokers would make the effort worth it.

Another difficulty would be to get the companies to agree to this. But I also believe that if the companies were aware of the bad effects of tobacco and the effects the advertisements have on children, they would change their minds and take those factors into consideration. To be concluding, any suggest solutions cannot be success without the support by the entire society; with the innocence of youth and deficiency of life experience, <https://assignbuster.com/issues-of-tobacco-advertising-for-youth-assignment/>

children do not have the ability to determine the credibility of the source from which they receive information.

Advertisers claim it is the role of the parent to manage influences on their children. However, the advertisers need to share this responsibility as it would be impossible to counteract all of the potentially adverse effects. Children must endure the consequences of advertising that is not appropriately directed at them from all mediums. All adults, parents and advertisers, must join together to deflect the contradicting messages derived from marketing such as health risks from smoking or drinking alcohol, proper diet, and unrealistic body image.