

Annotated bibliography on engineering an image smoking and the youth market

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



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Engineering an Image: Smoking and the Youth Market

Thesis statement -

Tobacco companies have traditionally played on the desire of young people to project an image in order to create a continual supply of customers.

Advertising for cigarettes and other tobacco products has, over the years, sought to ingrain in young people (and others) a sense that smoking reflects desirable qualities, ranging from sophisticated and chic (i. e. Virginia Slims) to manly and independent (Marlboro). This manipulation of an important aspect of human development – the search for identity – is ruthless and exploitative, and is emblematic of a dark streak in America’s capitalistic, profit-at-all-costs ethos: a credo that interest groups and the federal government have for years attempted to bring under control.

Research points -

The influence of peer pressure among youth acts as a facilitator/enabler for the image-conscious messaging in tobacco advertising. For boys, tobacco use is part of a male ritual in which one is expected to act masculine in front of one’s friends. For girls, body image is an overpowering mediator of behavior and encourages young women to smoke because tobacco advertising has so subtly associated smoking with slimness.

Despite recent court rulings against “ big tobacco,” including a landmark 2006 decision in U. S. District Court, tobacco companies continue to use every means at their disposal to adapt to the situation and continue creating

a renewable source of business – the youth market. In fact, studies indicate that the courts and federal

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lawmakers have simply forced the tobacco industry to become more sophisticated about targeting and reaching this lucrative market. For instance, when tobacco billboard advertising was banned, tobacco manufacturers simply increased advertising activities in and around convenience stores, thus reaching young people more directly (Tobacco-Free Kids, 2012).

This more targeted outreach initiative has had a measurable effect on youth smoking. For example, the U. S. Surgeon General’s office has reported that one in three youths below the age of 26 smoke (American Cancer Society, 2012). This trend reversal (from 1997 to 2003, there was a decrease in youth smoking) holds ominous consequences for the health of the younger generation and for the economy, as health care costs for tobacco-related illnesses are expected to rise in relation to the upsurge in tobacco use.

Annotated Bibliography -

Cummings, K. M., Morley, C. P., Horan, J. K., Steger, C. and Leavell, N-R. (2002). “ Marketing to America’s Youth: Evidence from Corporate Documents.” *Tobacco Control*, 11 (suppl. 1): i5-i17.

This paper, which was published shortly after key rulings on the tobacco industry, shows that tobacco companies specifically target the youth market in their advertising, despite protestations to the contrary. This assertion is borne out by ample evidence, such as the use of special products, packaging

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and pricing aimed directly at the youth market. The authors state that theirs is a “systematic analysis” of previously inaccessible tobacco industry documents and correspondence, and of what can only be described as deliberate

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marketing innovations intended to lure young people into tobacco use (Cummings, Morley, Horan, Steger, and Leavell, 2002). Part of the industry’s rationale is that young people are less likely to be as informed of the dangers of tobacco use as adults, therefore the industry has tailored its brand messaging to what it considers a less sophisticated, more easily influenced segment of the population. For instance, this report indicates that there is a tendency among adolescent smokers to simply ignore the long-term risks of smoking (Cummings, Moran, et al, 2002).

Wakefield, M. A., Terry-McElrath, Y. M., Chaloupka, F. J., Barker, D. C., Slater, S. J., Clark, P. I. and Giovino, G. A. (2002). “Tobacco Industry Marketing at Point of Purchase After the 1998 MSA Billboard Advertising Ban.” *American Journal of Public Health*, v. 92(6).

This exhaustive review of the tobacco industry’s tactical response to the billboard advertising ban reveals that point-of-purchase marketing has become crucial not only to youth marketing efforts, but to its ongoing initiative to create a new generation of tobacco users. Stymied in one area, the industry has proven resilient, simply pouring its considerable marketing resources into another strategy, one that reaches young people at the source. This study utilized an in-depth study of retailers from across the U. S.

in gathering new data on the tobacco industry's strategic adaptation to what many once considered a crushing blow to its ability to grow its clientele. The study used a random sampling of up to 30 retailers (who sell tobacco products) in any given community, examining everything from signage to the use of shopping baskets, clocks and other

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functional objects (Wakefield, Terry-McElrath, Chaloupka, Barker, Slater, Clark and Giovino, 2002).

Feighery, E., Borzekowski, D., Schooler, C. and Flora, J. (1998). " Seeing, Wanting,

Owning: The Relationship Between Receptivity to Tobacco Marketing and Smoking Susceptibility in Young People." *Tobacco Control*, 7(2), 123-128.

This article specifically examines the connection, both physical and psychological, between young people's openness to tobacco marketing and their vulnerability to tobacco usage. This study went directly to young people, having sampled youth in 25 classrooms in five San Jose, Calif. middle schools. Social influences (such as peer pressure) were of primary concern, as was the affect of such influences on receptivity to tobacco marketing messages and branding efforts. The study revealed that about 70 percent of the respondents showed at least some receptivity to tobacco marketing, which led the authors to conclude that receptivity plays directly into smoking/tobacco use susceptibility, with all of its health ramifications

(Feighery, Borzekowski, Schooler, and Flora, 1998). As such, tobacco advertising creates a desire in young people for promotional items which, in turn, is apt to lead to long-term tobacco use of some kind. The consequent message is that further controls on tobacco marketing are definitely needed.

Snell, C. (2005). Peddling Poison: The Tobacco Industry and Kids. Greenwood, CT:

Praeger Publishers.

This decidedly subjective view of tobacco advertising and the youth market portrays the big tobacco manufacturers as calculating industrialists, bent on ruthlessly exploiting a highly vulnerable segment of the country's population. In this effort, Snell notes that

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only the automobile industry expends more money annually on advertising than does the tobacco industry, which in recent years has increased its marketing budget to a staggering \$10 billion annually (Snell, 19). This is, in large part, a direct response to the unprecedented constraints placed on tobacco manufacturers and advertisers over the past 15 years. As in the previously mentioned study (see above), Snell considers the potential relationship between tobacco advertising and tobacco use among America's young people. Much of this book has to do with core business principles, such as the need to find new customers. Snell notes that in light of the product's lethal effects, it is difficult for the tobacco industry to find new customers. Consequently, it has turned to a less savvy group – the nation's young people – to create a new and willing market for its products.

Boyle, P., Gray, N., Henningfield, J., Seffrin, J. and Zatonski, W. Tobacco: Science, Policy and Health. Oxford, UK: Oxford Univ. Press.

This compilation features in-depth examinations of all aspects of tobacco use and tobacco marketing. Of specific interest is its consideration of one of the tobacco industry's most subtle, and misleading, tactics. The industry's youth smoking prevention initiatives, ostensibly launched to engender good will for the industry with the public, has proven to be a "Trojan Horse" for tobacco companies, who have actually leveraged this public relations gimmick against the youth market. The book argues that this has enabled big tobacco to create the possibility that, through good relations with young people, it might encourage tobacco use in the future. Also, and more damaging, the anti-youth smoking

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initiative can be, and has been, used to argue against the need to fund more direct, effective (and legitimate) tobacco control strategies. Another reverse psychology ploy

has been to position tobacco use as "for adults only," thus increasing the likelihood that curious youths will try tobacco products.

Tindall, J. A. (2009). Peer Power, Book Two: Workbook: Applying Peer Helper Skills. New York: Routledge.

This book, part of a series on peer pressure among young people, helps youths develop strategies to deal with negative social pressures. Practical situations are portrayed to illustrate the uses to which these coping skills can be put, and to point out danger areas and dangerous activities for young

people. One such subject is tobacco, and the pressure that tobacco marketing can bring to bear on youth, particularly in group situations when teens are most likely to engage in harmful behaviors. Tindall relates that research has shown that adolescents are three times likelier to respond to tobacco advertising than adults, and that a third of under-age smoking is attributable to the effects of tobacco marketing activities (Tindall, 389). Tindall points to the introduction of “starter products,” which are specifically tailored to attract young people and to encourage future tobacco use of either smoke or smokeless products (389).

**Wakefield, M., Flay, B., Nichter, M. and Giovino, G. (2003).
“Effects of Anti-Smoking**

Advertising on Youth Smoking: A Review.” *Journal of Health Communication*, Vol. 8, 229-247.

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This study examined the effects of anti-smoking campaign advertising on youths. It utilized controlled experimental studies in Finland, Australia and the United States. The research revealed that anti-smoking advertising seems to produce more reliably positive effects in pre-adolescents or early adolescents. As well, it proved that social group interaction could have either a positive or negative effect on the subjects that were studied. It is important to note that, though anti-smoking advertisements can produce positive behaviors in young people, there is no single message or method that can produce an actual reduction in youth smoking (Wakefield, Flay, Nichter and Giovino, 243). Another finding of this

study indicated that there could be value in directly comparing the effects of anti-smoking advertising from the government and advertising launched by the tobacco companies on young people. It also remains to be determined whether individual anti-smoking campaigns, or the cumulative effective of all advertising is more effective in producing positive behavior.

Bauer, U. E., Johnson, T. M. Hopkins, R. S. and Brooks, R. G. (2000). “ Changes in Youth

Cigarette Use and Intentions Following Implementation of a Tobacco Control Program: Findings from the Florida Youth Tobacco Survey, 1998-2000.”

JAMA, 9; 284(6), 723-728.

The state of Florida initiated a study to assess the effect of a pilot program on tobacco control among young people. This study will help gather information on how tobacco use behaviors are affected over time by marketing programs. This study measured the changes in behaviors among school students over a two-year period (Bauer, Johnson, Hoskins and Brooks, 2000). Middle school and high school students were the primary

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subjects, with a 12 percent increase in those who said they will never smoke again having been registered among middle school students, and a seven percent increase in high

Lapointe, M. M. (2008). Adolescent Smoking and Health Research. Cite.

Research shows that 80 percent of smokers generally begin using tobacco before they reach the age of 18. It is estimated that about 6, 000

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adolescents try tobacco in some form every day, and that about half of these will become chronic users of tobacco. In all, roughly 1, 000 of these will die from tobacco-related illnesses (Lapointe, 27). This book offers a wide-ranging look at different marketing and informational programs aimed at impacting tobacco use among youth and the chronic national health problems that it causes (the cost of which amounts to \$630 per every American household, for a total of \$70 billion) (Lapointe, 28). School-based informational programs, community-service initiatives, media campaigns and minority prevention programs are all reviewed and assessed in terms of their comparative effectiveness. The geographic spread of the study encompasses six states in the east, central and western portions of the country, including California, Florida, Massachusetts, Oregon, Arizona and Mississippi.

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“ Youth Smoking Rates Drop in Virginia with LifeSkills Training.” Botvin LifeSkills Training. 2012.

The Virginia Tobacco Settlement Foundation exists to fund the implementation of programs that train young people to make good decisions concerning tobacco and substance use. It is part of a statewide program to reduce and prevent tobacco use among the young. The LifeSkills program seeks to counteract the effects of tobacco industry advertising, particularly among young people who are more prone to making poor decisions about tobacco without important information and coping skills. This initiative is aimed at reducing the negative effects of tobacco advertising, but it is a commercially

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based program, with a compelling though vested interest in its own success. As such, this study should be carefully assessed for its useful components, while weeding out the overtly self-serving parts.