

# [The anti-smoking media campaign among adolescents](https://assignbuster.com/the-anti-smoking-media-campaign-among-adolescents/)

### INTRODUCTION

In the 20th century, smoking has been established as the leading cause of many preventable diseases (i. e. cancer) and deaths. Antismoking ads started in the 1967, when FCC required broadcasters to air one antismoking message for every three cigarette (Siegal 1998). At first these ads were free until it became effective to the audience that it eliminated the free advertisings. Throughout these years, it provided a worldwide dispute to health of the community. Liu reports:

“ Since Minnesota introduced the first paid anti-smoking media campaign in 1986, many other states have used a proportion of their cigarette excise tax revenue to fund large-scale anti-smoking advertisement through the mass media. Those media campaigns try to provide the public with health information about the harmful effects of smoking on health, and, therefore, change people’s smoking behavior, based on the theoretical hypothesis that more informed people are more likely to choose healthy lifestyle” (Liu 2009, p. 29).

Constantly, advertisers are creating advertisements, such as billboards, commercials and other interesting promotions, for anti-drugs and anti-smoking. It is found in many different places that can be simply seen by the public, preferably among adolescents and teenagers, to get their attention. For example, “ Florida has reported that its “ Truth” advertisements attacking tobacco firms are effective, on the basis of surveys showing 40% and 16% declines in smoking among middle and high school students in the state, respectively” (Penchman 1999, p. 2). Recent studies have argued various points that these ads are not working for our city and future generations. Clearly, the government is clearly spending a lot of money for these advertisements but past presidents such as, George W. Bush, tempted with the idea to cut spending because of no concrete answer for a positive outcome. In addition, news media in different markets indicated that teenagers are using more marijuana because of these popular ads that they are constantly seeing in the media. For example, many adolescents feel that marijuana is fashionable drug among their peers because it is popular usage in media such as movies, commercials and many other outlets. Not all people involved in media have agreed with this statement. Others have disagreed with their counterparts and stated that these advertisements are actually working for many people. Research studies done in the past have proved that these advertisements have been a significant positive change for less use of drugs among society. Recently, these advertisements have been getting realistic to the point that it might scare potential users away. In addition, past surveys have been conducted which stated that majority of the people that seen these types of ads are trying to quit from destroying their health.

Research studies that found some type of evidence for the success of these media campaigns such as, reducing cigarette consumption and drugs use among adolescents and adults shows that several governments have cut the spending on their control programs. The lost of funding has been in use in other areas such as the recent hit of the economic recession which could have a serious influence on the future success of antismoking and anti-drug control initiations. In addition, policy makers have stated that there is a lack of evidence that these messages are working. This topic brings back to the debate that these ads are producing cigarette use instead of stopping it.

“ Many researchers have different ideas on whether advertising for antismoking should be used for tobacco use prevention, which depends on both its effectiveness and cost-effectiveness” (Pechmann 1999, p. 2). Currently, they’re no significant evidence that these ads are actually working media. Others are confused if these ads are wasting taxpayers’ money and not benefiting our society. “ For instance, significant amount of research has been done on this topic and little conclusive evidence of a direct link between advertising-only interventions and reduced adolescent smoking dominance. However, I do agree there is an indirect evidence for the effectiveness of antismoking and antidrug advertising” (Pechmann 2003, p. 16).

“ Mass communication media play such a significant role in contemporary society, that we could not conceive it without their presence” (Televisa). Since the introduction of media, smoking was brought into new heights and established new audience to attract. Tobacco companies have taken advantage of the media, which they have, supplied billions of dollars on advertising of tobacco. These companies make smoking glamorous, fun and “ cool” to the public. Along with the advertising in media, many include general surgeon message, which is in fine print that many viewers do not notice the health concerns of the use of cigarettes. Recently there has been a surge of cancer among people that antismoking campaigns have been created to end or to put a stop on these glamorous ads and tobacco companies. The opposing ads demonstrated the negative aspects of smoking, which is mainly targeted for adolescents along with statistics on the mortality rate cause by smoking. Along with tobacco advertising, parents were another influenced for young adults to start smoking. The rival ads such (thetruth. com) started to use parents, whom do not smoke, as the anti-smoking and anti-drug gear towards the adolescents.

Over the past seven years, television ads have gotten increasingly graphic and even gruesome. In recent months, television ads have gotten more graphical which has been taken a page from a horror movie. These ads are trying to hit an objective goal of having 20, 000 smokers to stop the routine. In addition, New York City has raise up the prices on its pack of cigarettes up to $10. Along with habit, it is costing New Yorkers $250 a month just on smoking cigarettes which can use that money for other needs. The government wants to reduce people from smoking and it’s trying its best to achieve its goal. New York Officials claim that the ads are fighting “ fire with fire” when comes to widespread cigarette advertising. For instance, “ The National Cancer Institute reports cigarette manufacturers spend some $37 million a day on average to hawk their product, a whopping $13. 5 billion per year” (Inbar). The message that these anti-smoking campaigns are doing is expressing that someone might suffer and die from smoking but also, it may wreck someone’s family.

In the present-day, media depicts drug use and smoking as a popular craze to do. Televisions shows and movies depict drugs and smoking as a good habit and do not state any negative consequences on the use of it. Today’s audience watches these shows and movies, which get the sense that smoking and using drugs is a “ cool thing to do”. For example, HBO’s television “ Bored to Death” and 90s cult classic movie, “ Half-Baked”, depicts characters that continuous smoking marijuana throughout the whole act. Throughout these programming, it does not stated any negative aspect from smoking marijuana but instead glamorous as a drug that can be use for relaxation. Television ads depict the negative aspects of marijuana and cigerrette use as someone whom can lose their concentration, vision and can cause serious damage to their brain cells. According to Variety, Triplett writes,

“ A senior lawmaker, Ed Markey (D-Mass.), wants more action from Hollywood against smoking, and the Motion Picture Association of America pledged to try opening a direct dialogue on the issue. Markey wants to ask MPAA topper Dan Glickman to improvise on the following: Including antismoking public service announcements on DVDs. Certifying that no one involved during a production received anything of value for using or displaying tobacco in the film and eliminating tobacco brand imagery from movies” (Triplett).

If adolescents see their favorite actors or actresses smoking, it will lead them to believe that smoking is a good thing to do or not harmful. But these changes in the movie industry will try to eliminate smoking from their movie scenes to not influence anyone about smoking. It is great idea because many adolescents look up to these celebrities as role models.

### INTERVENTION

The intervention to reduced smoking habits has been on the community and its two aims. The reasons for the campaigns are to highlight the dangers of smoking in terms of health and to reduce the amount smoked and potential smokers in the community. The statewide tobacco prevention and education campaign launched to target audience from ages 12-17 to inform them about the harsh realities of smoking. The campaign was created along with group of teen advisors whom themselves were smokers or knew someone that smoke to get the best perception to help succeed with these ads. The funds come from tobacco tax dollars that purpose is to be used for prevention efforts. The idea for this campaign is the let the audience know that smoking can be addictive and hard to quick. Not all of the campaigns are true, as it seems. For example, Baram writes about a famous controversial spokesperson for antismoking campaign but continue to smoke after he filmed a commercial about the harm that smoking can do for a human body. Baram writes:

“ Skip Legault, with his tale of two heart attacks, strokes and an amputated right leg, has become the star of anti-smoking posters and commercials blanketing New York since December. But the 48-year-old former repairman isn’t getting the message — Legault said he still smokes up to a full pack of Marlboros every day. “ I can’t stop smoking,” Legault told ABCNEWS. com. “ I’ve been smoking since I was 8, and I’m afraid to quit.” ABC”. This case of Skip Legault made national headlines because of the issue of quitting smoking is much harder than it seems” (Baram 2008).

Even, addictive smokers admit that it is hard. Many people believe that they can quit on their will but it is different. The chemicals drive these smokers to smoke more because of the addiction.

A marketing campaign that has been successful in getting its message across is thetruth. com. The 1997 Settlement Act mainly funded the company. It has been the number one protestor against smoking. The anti-smoking campaign consists of several ways to reach to the massive amount of audience. Each way is to attract audience on the hazards that smoking can happen to an individual. The ads are in English and Spanish, which include television ads, radio ads, posters, cinema advertising, online media, social media, and Internet advertising and original websites.

### FUNDING

Before 1988, mass media campaigns relied on free advertising through public service announcements or short-term funding for specific campaign (Siegal 1998). These ads were not aired during prime time, which made little progress towards reaching the mass audience. The ads were heavily dependant on donation of advertising time by broadcasters. In 1988, the use of mass media for antismoking changed by voters in California approved Proposition 99. This election required that tobacco companies donated 20% of their revenue for the state to provide educational programs and increased of the state cigarette tax by 25 cents. As Warner reports, “ The purpose is to demonstrate that, with various combinations of policy changes, mass media information, and smoking cessation programs, smokers can be encouraged to stop smoking, and young people can be prevented from starting to smoke” (Warner 1982, pg. 378)

A court settlement that changed everything for antismoking media is 1997 settlement. The background begins, in August 1997, when the Florida Gov. Lawton Chiles made an historical out of court settlement among all tobacco companies at that time. The massive payout of $11. 3 billion dollars is the considered the day that “ the straw that broke Joe Camel’s back” (Grossman 1997 p. 290). This settlement led to the creation of thetruth. com whom is an advertising company that campaign against smoking. In addition, the money was used to compensate the state for public health costs caused by smoking-related illnesses.” The main goal of this settlement is to provide a way to lower down the use of cigarettes among young adults and give a helping hand to adults to quit smoking. The main idea of the settlement is to educate non-smokers about the effects of smoking and the harm of its chemicals.

In “ Cigarette Taxes”, Grossman reports that the agreement calls on tobacco companies to:

* Pay billions of dollars for a host of public education and health programs;
* Reimburse states for the cost of treating tobacco related illnesses;
* Set aside a multi-billion dollar fund to compensate smokers who win individual lawsuits against the tobacco companies; and
* Severely curtail marketing and advertising cigarettes, especially to teenagers.

All of theses changes made a significant progress in the campaign against smoking. Since the settlement, smoking has been a decline for many users as they reported that the main reason to quit were due to the informercials and mass media adverstiing. The adversiting has faced some roadblocks in the process of succeeding. For example, in 1992, Gov. Wilson suspended California’s media campaign for other purposes. In 1995 and 1996, he censored and pulled other commercials that went against tobacco companies. The motivated behind this act still remains unsolved but it would not be surprise if he were supporting tobacco companies in some form of way. Another example, Siegal reports, in 1996, Assembly Speaker Curtis Pringle introduced a bill that would have restricted the media campaign to messages dealing with health and disallowed spots attacking the tobacco industry (Siegal 1998).

### TYPES OF CAMPAIGNS

In March of 2009, the New York State Department of Health released ads for antismoking which cost $1. 2 million from the state’s budget. The campaigns are featured in medical journals, newspapers and other publications such as the Internet. These ads are encouraging healthcare providers to make quitting a main concern with their patients who smoke. These ads were photo-shopped that featured images of patients with oversized ears to demonstrated that smokers are willing to listen from their doctors about the hazards of smoking. The reason for these ads is to attract healthcare workers because many adolescents go for their annual physical exam. Somehow, adolescents interact with doctors and nurses and are convincing to help these young adults to stop or before they start smoking.

In earlier years of advertising, anti-smoking groups and health departments have attempted to oppose the advertising of tobacco by creating their own ads to emphasize the negative effects of smoking. The commercials included smoking cessation, the increased risk of lung cancer and other hazards problems that were seen passive for other public members. However, over the years, the ads have become more aggressive and more combative against smoking. Now these ads are focused on decreased physical attractiveness such as erectile dysfunction and graphical messages such as losing fingers and black lungs. These campaigns are much targeted to the younger crowd than its predecessor.

Around the globe, smokers know that smoking tobacco is bad for their nature but they continue to do it regardless of their hazards that come along with it. Current smokers that I have met stated that the number one reason that they cannot stop smoking because of they are addicted to smoking and/or the use of tobacco. Many smokers are addicted to the scent and the nicotine, whom several years ago, the tobacco companies have tried to cover it up to make more money of it. Nicotine is a stimulant form of factor that has been considered one of the worst addictions to break compare to cocaine and heroin use. It is not the only chemical involved with cigarettes but along with 4, 000 chemicals is involved which can make an individual much harder to quit.

Aside from the fact that cigarette smoking can damage the health of the one smoking but it can also pose serious health risks to other people in the surrounding area. A person that smokes within distance can promote second hand smoke to his peers. This situation can lead to others to walk away from the venue and/or to move away from the entire scenery. Since Mayor Bloomberg was elected, he banned all types of smoking in nightclubs; restaurants and other public places to decrease second-hand smoke and increased businesses for these places that people avoided because of the tobacco smell. Smokers should be educated on their smoking can be to those people around them, including children. This is one of the reasons that anti-smoking campaigns focused on. The campaigners wanted to stop second hand in the neighborhood to prevent cancer and asthma.

The campaign for the anti-smoking will try not to use propaganda but instead promote facts about the hazards of smoking. The posters for the campaign against smoking are with feature graphics that is within accepted limits for the culture that it is intended as not to attract negative publicity. The ads do not have any racist overtones or anything that will offend the mass public. The campaign was design to attract people’s attention regardless of race, color, age, and sex.

The preferred approach for advertisers is arousing fear because nothing is as vivid as violence and nothing translates as to film as horror. The tendency of media to control against open-mindedness is one of the dominant themes in media criticism. The only aim of the campaign is to distribute as much promotional campaign against smoking as possible within a very limited area. In reference from thetruth. com, they have listed celebrities and well-known actors to get the message across to viewers that smoking is not “ cool”. The anti-smoking group believes that having celebrities and other well-known faces will attract a bigger audience than having a request from the government and its surgeon general.

There are several message theme labels that are use in anti-smoking advertising across the border. Based on Penchmann’s recent research,

“ The message theme labels are the following: disease and death (Smokers suffer from health effects), endangers others, (second-hand smoke), cosmetics, (unattractive side effects), smokers’ negative life circumstances (loser lifestyle), refusal skills role model (role models do not smoke), marketing tactics (image advertising), selling disease and death (tobacco firms use manipulation and deception to sell a product that causes harm), and substantive variation (several messages use to spread one meaning)” (Penchmann 1994, p. 240).

Each message theme is use in their ways by marketers and campaigners. It has proved that all of them methods none have made the effort that the “ shock method” has produce.

Since 2007, the New York City Department of Health launched a series of anti-smoking campaigns which included smokers quit hotline and free nicotine patch and gum clinics in certain areas at certain times throughout the year. The television ads promoted the damage smoking can do to the body. These ads were noted for their graphic nature as well as their effectiveness. Since 2008, a second series of ads launched that can be seen nearly in every subway train station. It is about “ Marie” a Hispanic Middle-Aged woman whom describes the amputations and pain she has undergone in relation to developing a disease that was the effects of smoking cigarettes.

Each day routine smokers die from smoking related diseases each day. In a single cigarette 4700 cancer-causing chemicals are found which are have general surgeon messages pasted on the cigarette cartons. Despite the warnings, smokers continue to smoke. Some of these chemicals include acetone, ammonia, formaldehyde and arsenic. It is disgusting that people are putting these chemicals in their bodies and lungs daily. It is a suicide waiting to happen.

Earlier times, Men were to consider smokers more than women. Times have changed and now more women smoke to deal with stress or problems. In addition, social influences such as friends and partygoers are most likely to smoke. Most modern women today will agree that the demand and multiple roles they have taken on have grown over the years. It is no small wonder that many have turned to cigarettes to deal with stress.

### EFFECTIVENESS

Although the main goal of anti-smoking media campaigns is to quit smokers to quit smoking, little evidence suggests that the role of these campaigns are helping to stop. The campaigns can provide a new insight for young people such as non-smokers and those smokers wanting to quit to lead a normal life. These campaigns cost less money than sending someone to be hospitalized or suffer severe consequences because of smoking. It is a healthier and more prosperous future for our younger generation but not all of antismoking ads are effective. Research study has shown that the most successful campaigns are exposing the tobacco industry’s manipulation on young adults; focus on themes of second hand smoke and cigarette addiction (Siegal 1998). Campaigns that simply say, “ do not smoke” are the least successful because it not reinforcing adolescents to experience making decisions and the ability to grow up. For example, “ most adolescents want to appear mature, independent, savvy, attractive, and cool, and many think that not smoking will help them realize these goals. Smokers’ Negative Life Circumstances messages suggest that smoking “ is a barrier to achieving [these] goals” (Penchmann 2003, p. 10). These ads are effective in their own ways that likely to change someone’s thoughts on the idea of smoking.

### STATUS AND IMPACT

The question is, “ Does anti-smoking ads work?” It is a tough question to answer because there is no direct link that it does work. As Ms. Garcia, whom I interviewed, stated that “ these aids are not working and the campaigners should find other ways to attract its audience.” The antismoking ads offer two ways that it can spread it messages. The messages are if a person smokes than that person would not succeed in life and if you do not smoke, you would be successful in life. The Tobacco remains one of the most widely abused substances. After writing this report and reading other research articles related to this topic, I found there is at least a connection with anti-smoking campaigns and decreased use of smoking among adolescents. For example, smoking is at historically low among groups of ages over 12 years old compared to the late 1990s when the campaign started. Many people believe because of the increased advertisements and its graphical nature has made influenced in these changes. Most of the advertisements are found on during times that young adults are at home usually after school programming to get their attention. Before, it used to seen at various times of day. I believe it has made impact among our future generation and as long the government keeps pumping money into the campaign, I feel lower down smoking use but never fade it away.

These ads had made an impact in society. When people are asked about these anti-smoking ads, their first impression is to mention the graphical nature that it has. Even younger adults have stated that, “ if their lungs are going to turn black because of smoking, might as well not even start”. But not everyone agrees that these ads are effective, as it seems to be. For instance, Pearman Parker writes, “ They can [be effective], though, when they reinforce the perception that their close friends listen and respond to the campaigns.” In addition, Parker reports that the ads have been effective on younger teens but not towards adults. Parker writes, “ Adults know it is unhealthy and knows what can happen to them but that does not change their behaviors.” Overall, anti-smoking has made big impact since 1998 with its “ shock method”, it keep evolving and changing as time goes by.

The ads that are picture in the campaign can be viewed as personal testimonials from smokers whom are having the negative side effects from smoking. In these ads, real people tell their own stories about the negative impacts that have cause throughout their lifetime. The main message to get across the audience is provide a sadness or fear mood. Teenagers are more bound to learn from personal testimonials because it provides some sort of realness to the picture of the negative effects of smoking.

### CONCLUSION: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

According Penchmann’s recent study done in 2002, “ our findings to date suggest that tobacco-marketing (anti-industry) advertisement may not be especially effective with adolescents, though such advertisements are popular, in part because of the apparent success of the Florida Truth campaign.” It has been proven that The Truth Campaign has been the most successful in decreasing smoking habits among adolescents. Anti-smoking campaigns have other free options to promote their cause against smokers and the tobacco industry. The funds that the campaigners get can be use to provide free addiction clinics and research studies to help smokers on how to quit. As newspapers are fading away such as, their revenues have fallen 23% over the last two year (The State of News Media). Anti-smoking campaigns can push for interactive ways using social media and social networking. They can promote and advertise on MySpace, Twitter and Facebook to get users to join the campaign and give awareness of the health hazard on tobacco. For instance, social networking can reach to the other audiences especially to the crowd that attracts the most of its first-users are the adolescents. Another way of social media that antismoking campaigners can use is YouTube to gain more audiences. According to Hempel, “ YouTube is the largest video platform in the world (Hempel 37).” People behind the campaign can run concepts such as viral campaigns with homemade videos. The adolescent group is the most users of social networking and the anti-smoking campaign can promote their product with graphical ads that can catch their eyes.

Using social media will be a great way to interact with young adults. For example, using Facebook Connect, the creators can create an ad that collects the users’ information and create a video on the hazards of smoking tobacco with the information use of the viewer. Only the viewer will get to see the commercial ad to avoid controversy with others watching it unless the person wants to show to the mass.

In conclusion, anti-smoking advertisements have been a great topic to cover throughout the research. It has its positives and negatives on certain areas that affect various groups throughout the New York State and the nation as a whole. Many researchers oppose that the campaign has not been working because of the massive funds that the government invested since the 1997 settlement. In addition, many campaigners agreed that the campaign is positively proceeding to a certain extent because of the decline of smoking users have gone down. The percentage is not big but it shows that it is effective. The question to answer is what is the status and impact on adolescents by the anti-smoking campaign? The status is the campaign is still trying to attract adolescents not to smoke and the impact has that many young adults have been listening to these ads especially of the shock method nature of it. Will it succeed to stop people from smoking? The true answer is no because of the addictive chemicals involved in tobacco will make smokers hard to quit. As Penchman writes, “ It is conceivable that advertising that is ineffective on its own becomes effective when combined with other effort.” The campaign needs to develop a strategy to help people to quit. As Ms. Karp from MSNBC reports, that the Internet outlet is the best source to use to expand advertising strategy. For instance, withdrawal clinics, nicotine patches, non-for-profit outpatient treatment can help smokers in many places that the campaign is not helping. Overall, the anti-smoking is making an impact among all people and the status of campaign will become stronger because it is here to stay.

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Note: The article helps me understand it is hard to quit smoking. The fellow interviewed in the article was seen in an antismoking ad early in the year but still smokes today. The author writes about the hardships of quitting smoking and advertisements are not what it seems to be.

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