

The marketing of tobacco to youth
Dr. Crawford Moodie, Centre for Tobacco Control Research
University of Stirling



The presentation '*Marketing of tobacco to youth*' was made at the ASH Scotland/STCA Youth and Tobacco Conference on 25th March 2010. The presentation focused on tobacco marketing in the UK from before, but mainly after, the Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act in 2002, and how this has evolved in respect to packaging, which appears directed at young people.

The original presentation will not be available on the ASH Scotland conference webpage; instead Crawford Moodie has adapted the PowerPoint presentation so those working with young people can explore the marketing of tobacco to young people in a range of settings.

Crawford Moodie has also been supporting the Greater Glasgow and Clyde youth-led campaign by W-WEST called The Plain Truth, which aims to explore young people's views on cigarette packaging. W-WEST is conducting an online survey to gain young people's (aged 10-17 years) views on tobacco packaging, therefore please encourage the young people you work with to access their website at www.w-west.org.uk and complete the survey. It is confidential and should only take about 5 to 10 minutes.

This document will inform you on how the tobacco industry has and continues to target children through marketing so that you can explore some of these issues with young people.

1. **Marketing and youth**

- The tobacco, alcohol and gambling industries spend large sums of money marketing their products
- It is clear that tobacco advertising and promotion influences never smokers to take up smoking and smokers to keep smoking
- All research indicates that the impact of all alcohol marketing efforts encourages drinking initiation and increased consumption
- The gambling marketing literature is not as conclusive, but what research exists suggests that gambling advertisements are linked to youth gambling behaviour

What impact does this have on young people?

The tobacco, alcohol and gambling industries spend vast sums of money marketing their products, but why? Well put simply they aim to attract new customers and retain existing ones. All the evidence shows that the marketing of tobacco, alcohol and gambling affects related youth behaviour. The tobacco, alcohol and gambling industries maintain that none of their marketing efforts are targeted at youth; because that would be immoral and contravene advertising regulations. However, even if this was true, there is no way to prevent youth being exposed to these marketing efforts.

A previous example of youth targeted marketing is the RJ Reynolds television advert for Winston cigarettes, featuring the Flintstones (1960). For those with internet access and wanting to show the actual Flintstones advert, which last about two minutes, it can be found on You Tube if you use the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oc1TBBp4dC8>

[Ask the young people who they think the Flintstones campaign was targeted at?](#)

RJ Reynolds advertising campaign (billboards, magazines) for Camel cigarettes, featuring Joe Camel (1987)



[Ask the young people who they think the Joe Camel campaign was targeted at?](#)

Evaluation of the Camel cigarette campaign in the early 1990s revealed that the brand's share of the under eighteen year old market rose from 0.5% to 32.8% in the 3 years following the launch of the campaign. Although the company said the campaign was aimed at 25-49 year old male smokers adult market share remained the same.

An RJ Reynolds employee said, between the Flintstones and Joe Camel campaigns, that 'we are presently, and I believe unfairly, constrained from directly promoting cigarettes to the youth market ... **if our company is to survive and prosper, over the long term we must get our share of the youth market**' (Teague, 1973, RJ Reynolds)

Image of Marlboro in Superman II (1980)



media.weirdworm.com/

Images of Marlboro appeared on no less than 13 occasions in the film Superman II. The tobacco company claimed to have nothing to do with the appearance of Marlboro in this film.

Ask young people what they think about this kind of advertising and why the tobacco industry would do it? Ask young people to think about a film they have watched recently, what characters were portrayed as smokers and if they could identify the brand of cigarettes?

The truth is the tobacco company Philip Morris did pay for images of Marlboro to be placed in the movie, because it is not only a film for children but it draws associations between cigarettes and a superhero.

2. A new tobacco marketing strategy

The Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act was introduced in the UK between 2003 and 2005, essentially banning most forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. The advertising ban prohibited a number of marketing channels, and you can ask young people if they remember these as you go through each one. The ban included a ban on advertising in cinemas, on billboards, and in print (newspapers and magazines). It also included brand stretching (a tobacco name on a non-tobacco product, e.g. a Marlboro jacket or cap), sponsorship (e.g. Marlboro on Formula 1 cars), product placement (e.g. appearance of Marlboro in Superman II movie), free samples (giveaways) and on the internet (no tobacco advertising is allowed on the internet, although this is difficult to control, which is the reason for the question mark). This leaves the tobacco displays found in shops and the packaging.



Ask the class why they think the tobacco displays are often very large and positioned in the centre of the shop.

The brightly coloured shiny attractive cigarette packs are conveniently placed next to the brightly coloured shiny attractive sweet packs. This happens all over the world and is intended to make cigarettes appear normal and less harmful.

Research in Scotland by the Centre for Tobacco Control Research found that a lot of young people had positive perceptions of these tobacco displays. Ask the class what they think about this?



These displays are not only attractive but they obscure the health warnings.

3. The role of digital media

The internet has been fully exploited by gambling and alcohol companies, but tobacco companies are not allowed to advertise on the internet, and claim that they don't. However, there are some images of tobacco on sites such as Facebook.

Ask the class firstly if they use any social networking sites, and if so which ones, and if they have ever come across images of tobacco on any of these sites.



4. Tobacco packaging

Value Pack

Value packaging involves using a price on the pack to attract attention and communicate low value. It is unclear if this makes a difference to young people, but youth do tend to be very price sensitive.



Image Packs



These are the most popular youth brands. The Richmond pack was called a 'Chill Edition' pack (written on the side). This would appear to be using the type of language that young people use, i.e. trying to tap into youth culture.

Ask the young people if that type of pack appeals to them, and whether being called a 'Chill Edition' pack makes a difference to its appeal.

Innovation Pack



This pack has a fancy (innovative) way of opening- it slides open horizontally. Once open, a pair of headphones is drawn on to the section that slides out.

[Ask young people what this reminds them of and who they think it is targeted at?](#)

Clearly it is meant for the MP3 and iPOD generation, which is typically youth.

These Silk Cut packs are attractive, slim and elegant.

[Ask young people who these are meant for?](#)

They are in fact often called perfume packs and aimed, according to the tobacco company, at 18-24 year old women smokers. Of course most 18-24 year old women smokers begin when they are teenagers and these packs are likely to appeal to teenage girls conscious about their image and weight.



Do these forms of packaging have any effect?

1. Value packaging
 - Sterling's price-marked pack promotion increased sales by 110 million pounds in just four months
2. Image packaging
 - A limited edition Lambert & Butler pack, with a new design, increased sales by over £60 million pounds in 2004. The tobacco company said that this was due to the new pack design
3. Innovation packaging
 - The B&H Silver slide pack increased sales by 75 million pounds in 2007, which the company again said was due to the fancy pack

This shows that packaging is a very important marketing tool and it is capable of dramatically increasing sales.

Packaging Abroad...

The following examples of fancy cigarette packs have appeared in different countries, but not the UK - yet.



**Camel No.9
(United States)**



**John Player Special Pink
(France)**



**Lucky Strike: Game Pack
(France)**

The Lucky Strike game pack is a particularly good example, where a dial on the front of the pack has to be twisted to open it up – adult smokers would not be amused by this, children would however.

Lucky Strike: Glow pack (France) - The glow pack is a pack that lights up in the dark, again the target audience is young people.



The Camel cigarettes in a tin look like a sweetie tin. In Mexico it's called 'El Camello', which is very close to the Spanish word for sweets, which is 'El Caramello' - a coincidence, highly unlikely.



Marlboro 3838 phone (China)

This mobile phone shaped like a cigarette pack and with space to hold 7 cigarettes was made by a mobile phone company.

Philip Morris, the makers of Marlboro, claimed to know nothing about it. This is the same company however that claimed not to have placed images of Marlboro in the Superman II film.

5.

What next?

Plain packaging involves having all cigarettes in identical, dark brown packs, with only a brand name allowed.

Ask young people if they think this would make smoking less attractive, and whether they think it would prevent some young people taking up smoking?



Plain packaging: Why?

Tobacco packs now are the most important promotional vehicle for tobacco industry since the advertising ban. Branding remains a key driver of youth smoking, despite marketing restrictions, and the pack is central to this:

- 'Benson and Hedges Filter is defined first and foremost by the GOLD PACK, which quintessentially is the brand' (Colquhoun Associates, a tobacco marketing company, 1998)
- For marketers branding is everything, and for the tobacco industry the 'pack is the brand', so for them packaging is everything
- Plain packaging would make smokers feel and look less fashionable, attractive and popular
- Health warnings no longer undermined by fancy packaging

W-WEST challenge you to investigate The Plain Truth!

As mentioned earlier, Crawford Moodie has been supporting the Greater Glasgow and Clyde youth-led campaign by W-WEST called The Plain Truth, which aims to explore young people's views on cigarette packaging. W-WEST is conducting an online survey to gain young people's (aged 10-17 years) views on tobacco packaging, therefore please encourage the young people you work with to access their website at www.w-west.org.uk and complete the survey. It is confidential and should only take about 5 to 10 minutes.

