

Young Adults - Tobacco Industry Targets

Tobacco Use by Young Adults (18-24 year olds)

- ⊗ Nationally, 18-25 year olds have the highest rates of tobacco use.¹
- ⊗ In New York, 18-24 year olds smoke at significantly higher rates than other adults (23% vs. 18% for 25-64 year olds).²
- ⊗ Twelve percent of 18-24 year olds use other tobacco products such as cigars and smokeless, compared to 4.5% of other adults in New York.³
- ⊗ College smokers often describe themselves as “social smokers.” They smoke more with others, often when drinking alcohol. Many don’t think they are addicted; expect to stop smoking after graduation; and are concerned about the acceptability of tobacco use.⁴
- ⊗ 18 - 22 year olds not enrolled in full-time college were more likely to smoke cigarettes than their college attending peers (41% vs. 26%).¹
- ⊗ The 18-19 years olds who are in early stages of smoking are at risk of becoming regular smokers.⁵

The Tobacco Industry – They Haven’t Changed

Tobacco industry marketing expenditures increased dramatically after the Master Settlement Agreement in 1998, with a major surge in targeting 18-21 year olds. Tobacco companies spent **\$13.11 billion on advertising and promotion in 2005**. In New York that came to an estimated \$870 million, or over \$2 million a day.⁶

Tobacco industry documents reveal the following:

- ⊗ Smokers progress through stages to become addicted; the industry has developed marketing strategies to encourage experimentation at each stage.⁷
- ⊗ The industry focuses on social activities and transition periods in young peoples’ lives (going to college, joining the military or workforce) to solidify smoking habits.⁷
- ⊗ The industry carefully studies youth—and are experimenting with Internet, and stealth marketing (where consumers do not realize they are being marketed to) to create a “buzz” about products.⁸
- ⊗ A 2008 National Cancer Institute report concludes that tobacco company advertising and promotion is causally linked to increased use and youth smoking initiation.⁸

A Sample of Tobacco Industry Tactics

Coupons & Discounts

- ⊗ Tobacco companies spent \$9.7 billion nationally in 2005. Most (75%) of these promotional dollars were for discounts paid to retailers or wholesalers in order to reduce the price of cigarettes to consumers.⁹
- ⊗ These discount offers such as “dollar-off” and multi-pack deals are effective in reaching young adults who are more likely to use them at every opportunity.¹⁰

Promotional Events at Colleges, Bars, & Nightclubs

- ⊗ Promotional events are hosted at fraternities, sororities, bars, and clubs where free tobacco samples, coupons, and paraphernalia are given away. A survey of U.S. colleges and universities found that students at almost all schools – 118 out of 119 reported a tobacco promotion event on campus or in a bar or club where free samples were available.¹¹

- ⊗ Bar promotions have become key strategies where the industry targets young adults, reinforces brand imaging, and offers opportunities to sample brands.¹²
- ⊗ Bar activities include: games, contests, (i.e., female swimsuits & body art exhibitions) and free cigarette samples distributed by models.¹²
- ⊗ Companies collect smoker names and information at bar promotions. Materials such as samples, coupons, and gifts are sent to those on these mailing lists.¹²
- ⊗ Tobacco companies sponsor local band competitions at nightclubs, and advertise and promote selected bars and musical events. Bars benefit from the free advertising in exchange for their cooperation in the promotion.¹²

Appealing Products

- ⊗ New brands are being marketed to young smokers and racial/ethnic groups using colorful and stylish packaging. Candy and liqueur flavoring is used to mask the harshness of tobacco smoke. Flavors include Mandarin Mint, Mocha Taboo, and Kauai Kolada.¹³
- ⊗ Fruit and candy flavors have been added to smokeless tobacco, cigars, and rolling papers.¹³
- ⊗ In 2007, RJ Reynolds aggressively marketed Camel No. 9, a new product targeting young women and girls, by spending \$25-50 million on full-page ads in magazines such as *Glamour*, *Cosmopolitan*, & *InStyle* that have a high young female readership.¹⁴

Impact on Young Adult Tobacco Use

- ⊗ Students who did not smoke before age 19 and were exposed to tobacco promotion events at school or bars had higher rates of current smoking than those who were not exposed to promotions.¹⁰
- ⊗ Tobacco companies view bar promotions as worthwhile in enhancing brand image, providing an opportunity to present smoking as part of a glamorous lifestyle, and they are effective in increasing tobacco sales.¹¹

¹ Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration. (2007). Based on the 2007 National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health, <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k7NSDUH/2k7results.cfm#Ch4>. Retrieved October 2, 2008.

² New York State Department of Health. (2007). *Who's Smoking in New York?* October 2007. Prepared by RTI International, Research Triangle Park, NC. http://www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/tobacco_control/brochures_fact_sheets_reports.htm

³ RTI International. (2007). *Fourth Annual Independent Evaluation of New York's Tobacco Control Program: Final Report*. August 2007. Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International.

⁴ Moran, S., Wechsler, H., & Rigotti, N.A. (2004). Social smoking among US college students. *Pediatrics* 114 (4), 1028-1034.

⁵ New York State Department of Health. (2007). *Retail Advertising and Promotions for Cigarettes in New York*. September 2007. Prepared by RTI International, Research Triangle Park, NC. http://www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/tobacco_control/brochures_fact_sheets_reports.htm

⁶ U.S. Federal Trade Commission (2007). *Cigarette Report for 2004 and 2005*, 2007. Washington, DC: Federal Trade Commission.

⁷ Ling, P.M. & Glantz, S.A. (2002). Why and how the tobacco industry sells cigarettes to young adults: evidence from industry documents. *Am J Public Health*, 92(6), 908-916.

⁸ National Cancer Institute. (2008). *The Role of Media in Promoting and Reducing Tobacco Use*. Tobacco Control Monograph No. 19. Bethesda, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute. NIH Pub. No.07-6242, June 2008.

⁹ U.S. Federal Trade Commission (2007). *Cigarette Report for 2004 and 2005*, 2007. Washington, DC: Federal Trade Commission.

¹⁰ White, V.M., White, M.M., Greeman, K., Gilpin, E.A., & Pierce, J.P. (2006). Cigarette promotional offers who takes advantage? *Am J Prev Med*, 30 (3), 225-31.

¹¹ Rigotti, N.A., Moran, S.E., & Wechsler, H. (2005). US College students' exposure to tobacco promotions: prevalence and association with tobacco use. *Am J Public Health*, 95 (1), 138-44.

¹² Katz, S.K. & Lavack, A.M. (2002). Tobacco related bar promotions: insights from tobacco industry documents. *Tobacco Control*, 11, 92-101.

¹³ Carpenter, C.M, Wayne, G.F., Pauly, J.L., Koh, H.K. & Connolly, G.N. (2005). New cigarette brands with flavors that appeal to youth: tobacco marketing strategies. *Health Affairs*, 24 (6),1601-1610. Press release from Harvard School of Public Health. Retrieved on March 1, 2006 from <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/press/releases/press11102005.html>.

¹⁴ Campaign for Tobacco-Free kids. (2008). Tobacco industry continues to market to kids. Retrieved on October 3, 2008 from <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0156.pdf>.