

# Fact Sheet: Tobacco Industry Promotional Events

## Tobacco Use Stats

- Tobacco use begins young: 88% of adults who have ever smoked tried their first cigarette by the age of 18;<sup>1</sup> the average age at which smokers try their first cigarette is 14 ½.<sup>2</sup>
- Nationally, more than 48,500,000 are currently smokers.<sup>3</sup>
- In New York State:
  - 6.7% of middle school children smoke (Middle school males=7.2%, Middle school females=5.6%)<sup>4</sup>
  - 21.3% of high school students smoke (High school males=21%, high school females=21.6%)<sup>5</sup>
  - 21.6% of people over 18 smoke (Males=24.%, females=18.8%)<sup>6</sup>
- Tobacco Companies spend more than \$11.22 billion in marketing their products each year.<sup>7</sup>

## Health Effects of Tobacco Use

- 440,000 people die from tobacco-related illnesses every year, making it the leading cause of preventable death in the United States;<sup>8</sup> and
- Scientific studies have concluded that cigarette smoking can cause chronic lung disease, coronary heart disease, and stroke, in addition to cancer of the lungs, larynx, esophagus, mouth, and bladder;<sup>9</sup> and
- Each year, between 38,000 and 67,500 people die as a result of others' smoking. This includes effects of second hand smoke and of smoking during pregnancy.<sup>10</sup>

## The Impact of Tobacco Promotional Events

### Even mere awareness of a tobacco promotional event increases youth smoking susceptibility.

- One study found that a child who is aware of tobacco promotional activities and has a friend who owns tobacco promotional items is 3.4 times more likely to smoke than others who do not.<sup>11</sup>
- At least two other studies have shown to that desire to own tobacco promotional items increases youth susceptibility to smoking almost as much as does actually owning those items.<sup>12,13</sup>

### An estimated 1/3 of adolescent experimentation with smoking can be directly attributed to tobacco promotional activities.<sup>14</sup>

- If a child is not only aware of, but has also participated in, tobacco promotional activities, (s)he is 9.3 times more likely to smoke than kids not aware of tobacco promotions. And if that child received free tobacco product samples while participating in a tobacco promotion, that child will be 21.8 times more likely to smoke than the other kids.<sup>15</sup>
- In a longitudinal study, children who owned a tobacco promotional item and who named a brand that attracted their attentions, were 2.7 times more likely to become established smokers within the next 5 years.<sup>16</sup>

- Research has shown that branded tobacco paraphernalia is used by youth to 'try on' or to assimilate the identity of a smoker.<sup>17</sup> As stated in Philip Morris documents as early as 1969, the permanence of that 'identity' is soon to follow: "Smoking a cigarette for the beginner is a symbolic act, . . . 'I am not my mother's child, I'm tough, I am an adventurer, I'm not square' . . . As the force from the psychological symbolism subdues, the pharmacological effect takes over to sustain the habit."<sup>18</sup>

## Tobacco Industry Quotes

- "The fragile, developing self-image of the young person needs all the support and enhancement it can get. Smoking may appear to enhance that self-image in a variety of ways. If one values, for example, an adventurous, sophisticated, adult image, smoking may enhance ones self-image...This self-image enhancement effect has traditionally been a strong promotional theme for cigarette brands and should continue to be emphasized." *RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company, from a document entitled, Some Thoughts About New Brands of Cigarettes for the Youth Market, 1973.*
- "[Jack Daniels' merchandizing campaign is] an example of a viable positioning executed in a 'nonstandard' but authentic and unpretentious way, which not only reached [young adult] consumers, but converted [younger adults] into walking billboards." *RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company, from a document entitled, Are Younger Adult Smokers Important?, 1985.*
- "[T]he base of our business is the high school student." *Lorillard Tobacco Company Executive, 1978.*

<sup>1</sup>*Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People: A Report of the Surgeon General.* US Dept of Health and Human Services.1994.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>*Toll of Tobacco in the United States of America.* Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids.  
<sup>4</sup>*New York State Youth Tobacco Survey.* New York State Department of Health. 2002.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>*BRFSS.* New York State Department of Health. 2002.

<sup>7</sup>*Cigarette Report for 2001.* US Federal Trade Commission (FTC). June 12, 2003.

<sup>8</sup>*Annual Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Economic Costs - United States: 1995-1999.* U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 1999.

<sup>9</sup>US Dept of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Targeting Tobacco Use: The Nations Leading Cause of Death (2002).* Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/overview/oshaag/pdf>

<sup>10</sup>“State-Specific Prevalence of Cigarette Smoking Among Adults and Children’s and Adolescents’ Exposure to ETS – US 1996.” CDC. *MMWR.* 52 (40):1038-43.

<sup>11</sup>Altman, David G., et al. “Tobacco Promotion and Susceptibility to Tobacco Use among Adolescents Aged 12-17 Years in a Nationally Representative Sample.” *American Journal of Public Health.* Nov 1996; 86(11):1590-1593.

<sup>12</sup>Feighery, Ellen, et al. “Seeing, wanting, owning: the relationship between receptivity to tobacco marketing and smoking susceptibility in young people.” *Tobacco Control.* 1998; 7:123-128. Available at <http://tc.bmjournals.com/cgi/reprint/7/2/123>

<sup>13</sup>Pierce, John P., et al. “Tobacco industry promotion of cigarettes and adolescent smoking.” *JAMA.* February 1998; 279(7):511-515.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>15</sup> Altman, David G., et al. “Tobacco Promotion and Susceptibility to Tobacco Use among Adolescents Aged 12-17 Years in a Nationally Representative Sample.” *American Journal of Public Health.* Nov 1996; 86(11):1590-1593.

<sup>16</sup> Biener, Lois, and Siegal, Michael. “Tobacco Marketing and Adolescent Smoking: More support for a casual inference.” *American Journal of Public Health.* March 2000; 90(3):407-11.

<sup>17</sup>Feighery, Ellen, et al. “Seeing, wanting, owning: the relationship between receptivity to tobacco marketing and smoking susceptibility in young people.” *Tobacco Control.* 1998; 7:123-128. Available at <http://tc.bmjournals.com/cgi/reprint/7/2/123>

<sup>18</sup>“Why One Smokes.” 1969 Draft Report to the Philip Morris Board of Directors. Document Bates NO. 1003287836.