Public perception: comparing tobacco industry public relations campaigns of today and yesteryear

Cristin E. Kastner
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PUBLIC PERCEPTION: COMPARING TOBACCO INDUSTRY
PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGNS OF TODAY AND YESTERYEAR

By
Cristin E. Kastner

A Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts in Public Relations Degree
Of
The Graduate School
At
Rowan University
June 30, 2003

Approved by:

Date Approved: 6-26-03
This study compared public perception of tobacco industry public relations campaigns of today and yesteryear. Little study has been devoted to the public’s changing perception of tobacco public relations since the Master Settlement Agreement changed tobacco public relations efforts in 1998.

Written history of tobacco industry public relations served as the base of determining perception of yesteryear. Surveying 281 undergraduate Rowan University students determined today’s public perception of tobacco industry public relations.

Significant survey findings include:

- 80 percent felt the tobacco industry is not honest about the products it sells
- Half said the tobacco industry should not run its own anti-smoking television advertisements
- Almost half said smoking should still be allowed to be shown on television and in movies
- About two-thirds responded that they felt "neutrally" toward the tobacco industry's practice of public relations.
- Over half believed minors are the main target audience of tobacco advertising.

Over the years, the public has become increasingly aware of the tobacco industry's public relations efforts. However, this study found that current perceptions are contradictory. Students feel the tobacco industry's public relations efforts are deceptive, yet they do not feel overwhelming negative toward the industry or its public relations practices.
MINI-ABSTRACT

Cristin E. Kastner
PUBLIC PERCEPTION: COMPARING TOBACCO INDUSTRY PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGNS OF TODAY AND YESTERYEAR 2002/03
Dr. Don Bagin
Master of Arts in Public Relations

The public has become increasingly aware of tobacco industry public relations practices. Little study has been devoted to the public's changing perception of tobacco public relations since the Master Settlement Agreement in 1998. Today's students are aware of tobacco's public relations efforts, distrust tobacco public relations, yet do not feel overwhelmingly negative toward the industry.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to my Aunt Eileen, a person too wonderful for words. She died on July 17, 1996, from lung cancer.

Both her life and her death affect me tremendously.
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Chapter 1

Background

1928: Thin is In

Tobacco’s relationship with public relations began 75 years ago. In 1928, George Washington Hill of American Tobacco recognized an opportunity to expand the cigarette market: women. He decided the best way to entice women to smoke was to emphasize the benefits to their waistline. He hired Edward Bernays—“father of public relations”—to take this basic idea, and make American Tobacco sales soar from it.¹

At the time, thinness was not in vogue. But to sell the idea Hill hired him to sell, Bernays had to make women want to be thinner. The new slogan of Lucky Strike (American Tobacco’s best selling cigarette) became “Reach for a Lucky Instead of a Sweet.” To “crystallize public opinion” as Bernays called it, he used key communicators to tell the public that being thin was the new fashion statement. He enlisted the help of fashion photographers, artists and dance school entrepreneurs to shift public opinion. Bernays had one key communicator, photographer Nickolas Muray, write the following to a newspaper:

I have come to the conclusion that the slender woman who, combining suppleness and grace with slenderness, who instead of overeating sweets and desserts, lights a cigarette, as the advertisements say, has created a new standard of female loveliness...I am interested in knowing if my own judgment concurs with that of others, and should be most happy to have your opinion on this subject.

The opinions rolled in. Magazine editors began to write about ‘thin’ being in; newspapers ran editorials on ‘thin’ and publication photographs showed thinner women. Famous people—“actors, athletes, ‘beautiful girls’, society women and male dancers” were asked their opinions on ‘thin’, and those results published.²

Bernays’ office also distributed menus created by Home & Garden magazine. One of the menus’ tips for lunch and dinner was to reach for a cigarette instead of dessert. Bernays also targeted hotels, asking them to include cigarettes on their dessert menus; cabinetmakers to design kitchen space to hold cigarettes the same way there were sugar and flour compartments; container makers to make containers for kitchen countertops to hold cigarettes; and for home economics writers to “stress the importance of cigarettes in home-making...Just as the young and inexperienced housewife is cautioned not to let her supplies of sugar or salt or tea or coffee run low, so should she advised that the same holds true for cigarettes,” Bemays said.³ Bernays’ office even wrote anti-sweets, pro-cigarettes jokes and sent them to magazines such as Life and The New Yorker for publishing.⁴

1929: Torches of Freedom

But even though women had recently won the right to vote, it was still socially taboo for women to smoke in public. Riding on the social climate of women’s suffrage, Bernays created the “Torches of Freedom” special event to further entice women to smoke. Bernays learned that most women associated cigarettes with men—so, to them, smoking cigarettes in public represented a freedom men had that they didn’t. Cigarettes themselves were “torches of freedom.” Bernays convinced New York City’s socially elite

² Ibid.
³ Ibid., 25.
⁴ Ibid., 26.
women to smoke cigarettes in the Easter Parade down New York City's Fifth Avenue in 1929. By doing so, Bernays turned the act of women publicly smoking cigarettes from a social taboo to a social protest of women demanding equality to men. He persuaded these socially elite women to go against social norms by sending a telegram (signed by his secretary) that read:

“In the interests of equality of the sexes and to fight another sex taboo I and other young women will light another torch of freedom by smoking cigarettes while strolling on Fifth Avenue Easter Sunday. We are doing this to combat the silly prejudices that the cigarette is suitable for the home, the restaurant, the taxicab, the theater lobby but never, no, never for the sidewalk. Women smokers and their escorts will stroll from Forty-Eighth Street to Fifty-Fourth Street on Fifth Avenue between Eleven-Thirty and One O’Clock.”

Bernays' instructions for these smoking parade women were spelled out clearly:

“Because it should appear as news with no division of publicity, actresses should be definitely out. On the other hand, if young women who stand for feminism—someone from the Women’s Party, say—could be secured, the fact that the movement would be advertised too, would not be bad...While they should be goodlooking, they should not look too ‘model-y.’ Three for each church covered [on the route] should be sufficient. Of course, they are not to smoke simply as they come down the church steps. They are to join in the Easter parade, puffing away. On Monday of the Holy Week, the women should be definitely decided upon. On the afternoon of Good Friday, they should be in this office, by appointment, and given their final instructions. They should [be] told where and when they are to be on duty Easter morning and furnished with Lucky Strikes. As the fashionable churches are crowded on Easter, they must be impressed with the necessity of going early. ‘Business’ must be worked out as if by a theatrical director, as for example: one woman seeing another smoke, opens her purse, finds cigarettes but no matches, asks the other for

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6 Tye, p. 29.
a light. At least some of the women should have men with them.”

1934: The Green Ball

The relationship between tobacco and public relations grew even stronger over the years. In 1934, Bernays arranged “The Green Ball”—a charity event whose green theme was intended to increase sales of Lucky Strike cigarettes. Bernays learned that women were not buying Lucky Strikes as much because the green packaging clashed with their clothing. American Tobacco refused to change the color of Lucky Strikes, so Bernays changed women’s perceptions of the color green. To attend “The Green Ball”, one had to wear all green. To promote the event, the hostess of the ball invited fashion editors to a luncheon well before the event. Soon, fashion editors were covering the style of green, interior decorators were using green, and the press was writing about the color green—and “The Green Ball” itself. Bernays made green fashionable, thereby making a Lucky Strike package more fashionable to carry. His campaign was so successful (and its source and relationship to Lucky Strike hidden) that Marlboro’s advertisements soon featured a girl wearing a green dress with red trim—the colors of Lucky Strike, one of Marlboro’s biggest competitors.

1930s: Tobacco May Be Harmful

As early as the 1930s, the press was writing articles about the possible links between cigarettes and cancer. Bernays read the articles (mostly from Europe) and prepared for the possible crisis that public opinion would turn against the tobacco industry he was working for. He advised his client, “I do feel that serious attention should

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7 Ibid., 30.
9 Tye, p. 40.
be given to the problem of having ready a strong offensive in case the press should give
prominence to the recurring articles which I note, from time to time, on the relationship
of smoking and carcinoma.”10 One of Bernays’ methods to deflect a crisis was to sway
editors’ opinions about cigarettes. He advised American Tobacco Co. to bombard editors
with positive, authoritative opinion on tobacco. This way, when given an article about the
negative effects of tobacco, the editors might not print it because they may not believe
it.11

1950s: The Link Between Cigarettes and Cancer is Found

In the 1950s, the link between cigarettes and cancer gained coverage in the
mainstream United States media. Faced with crisis, American Tobacco hired John W.
Hill, founder of the public relations agency Hill & Knowlton. Hill counseled American
Tobacco to release the 1954 now-famous document “Frank Statement to Cigarette
Smokers.” The full-page advertisement ran in 448 newspapers nationwide. It announced
the creation of the Tobacco Research Institute Committee (TIRC), and organization
backed by the tobacco industry. Its purpose was to independently research the effects of
tobacco on the body. “Frank Statement to Cigarette Smokers” told the public “there is no
proof that cigarette smoking is one of the causes” of lung cancer and “we believe the
products we make are not injurious to health.” The statement tried to discredit the
scientific data found on the links between cigarettes and cancer. An excerpt from the
statement:

“Recent reports on experiments with mice have given
wide publicity to a theory that cigarette smoking is in some
way linked with lung cancer in human beings.

10 Tye, p. 46.
11 Ibid., 47.
“Although conducted by doctors of professional standing, these experiments are not regarded as conclusive in the field of cancer research. However, we do not believe that any serious medical research, even though its results are inconclusive should be disregarded or lightly dismissed. At the same time, we feel it is in the public interest to call attention to the fact that eminent doctors and research scientists have publicly questioned the claimed significances of these examples.”\textsuperscript{12}

1920s to 1950s: Public Perception of Campaigns

The public could not give feedback to tobacco companies on their opinions of public relations efforts because the public simply was not aware these methods were part of public relations campaigns.

During these years, the field of public relations was just forming. Public relations practitioners purposely hid who they were hired by—carrying out their campaigns without revealing their agency or corporation connections to key communicators, paid spokespeople, or the public. In some cases, practitioners even promoted lying to hide the truth.

While persuading women to smoke cigarettes in the 1928 campaign focused on trim waistlines, Bernays always hid his connection to American Tobacco Co. In a memo to an American Tobacco executive, Bernays reveals this strategy by advising his client to send their message through “a disinterested public-spirited citizen who would issue releases, statements, and letters just because he likes to...There are many such people. We could find one.”\textsuperscript{13} Bernays’ office frequently sent letters to people, signed by these ‘disinterested public-spirited citizens’. Sometimes the recipients of these letters would call Bernays’ office to try to find the source of who sent them. Bernays left instructions

\textsuperscript{13} Tye, p. 32.
with his staff that “under no circumstances is the name or telephone number of Edward L. Bernays to be given to anyone that calls.”

Bernays instructed his secretary, Bertha Hunt, to lie about her connection to American Tobacco when questioned about the “Torches of Freedom” parade walk. It was reported that Hunt said she was not connected with any firm—that, in fact, the parade walk was her idea. The New York Evening World reported Hunt “first got the idea for this campaign when a man with her in the street asked her to extinguish her cigarette as it embarrassed him. ‘I talked it over with my friends, and we decided it was high time something was done about the situation.’”

When Bernays approached the hostess of the Green Ball, he said a “nameless sponsor would defray the costs up to $25,000; our client would donate our services to promote the ball; the color green would be the ball’s motif and the obligatory color of all the gowns worn at the ball.” Bernays never revealed to the hostess that he was working on behalf of American Tobacco Co. The public did try to figure out who was behind the green theme, but the source was never revealed. In Philadelphia, a woman’s page editor wrote, “Let me know what you are plugging. It is so adroit that even I, hard-boiled old she-dragon, can’t detect it. If, as I suspect, it is glazed chintz, I will add a description with place to buy, including prices.”

And the historic beginning of tobacco companies’ denying their products caused cancer can be pinpointed with the “Frank Statement to Cigarette Smokers” Hill counseled his client to release. In late 1953, early experiments had already shown a link between cigarettes and cancer. Despite the evidence, F.A. Darr, president of R.J. Reynolds,
responded to allegations by saying there was "no real or substantial evidence showing cigarettes caused lung cancer." It was only a few days later that the presidents of the six largest tobacco companies met to discuss the public relations crisis and were counseled to release "Frank Statement to Cigarette Smokers." Senator Maurine Neuberger’s response to Darr’s comments was, "Ridicule and derision became deliberate defensive weapons in the hands of tobacco industry public relations experts."\(^{17}\)

**1960s to 1980s: A Change in Climate**

Almost as quickly as cigarette smoking became "in," the habit experienced backlash. Health officials began to warn of the dangers of cigarette smoking. The Surgeon General’s warning began appearing on cigarette boxes. Cigarette advertising on television was banned. Even Edward Bernays began working for the American Cancer Society to reshape the public perception of cigarettes he created.

But cigarette smoking remained popular. Teenagers smoked to rebel. Movie stars smoked on screen, appearing glamorous. Cowboys looked rugged while smoking. Cigarette smoking was a deep-rooted part of American culture—and even Edward Bernays could not change the public’s attitude this time.

"Had I known in 1928 what I know today I would have refused Hill’s offer," said Bernays, referring to his client, American Tobacco Company. His anti-smoking work earned him praise from Action On Smoking & Health, the nation’s largest and oldest anti-smoking organization.\(^{18}\)

Late 1990s: Public Perception of Campaigns

This backlash toward tobacco companies and their public relations and promotional efforts came to a head in the mid-1990s. The public felt manipulated by “Big Tobacco” and deceived by its promotional practices. To many, “Big Tobacco” represented corporate greediness at the expense of people’s lives. Overwhelmingly, the public felt that tobacco companies lied about their knowledge of the dangers of smoking and of the addictiveness of nicotine. “Big Tobacco” aggressively and knowingly targeted children through advertising tactics such as the Joe Camel campaign. In fact, a now-famous 1991 JAMA study showed that more six-year-old children associated Joe Camel with cigarettes than they did Mickey Mouse with Disney.¹⁹

During this time period, common knowledge statistics reported that 3,000 children each day began smoking for the first time and that the average first-time smoker was just 11 years old.

The anti-tobacco movement became stronger, gaining popularity and influence as it gained steam. In 1998 the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) was passed. This Agreement was “signed by attorneys general in 46 states and five U.S. territories and the tobacco industry. The agreement resolved lawsuits filed by the attorneys general against the tobacco industry and provided the states funding intended for tobacco prevention and control. The agreement required tobacco companies to take down all billboard advertising and advertising in sports arenas, to stop using cartoon characters to sell cigarettes and to

make many of their internal documents available to the public. The tobacco companies also agreed to not market or promote their products to young people. "

Need for a Study About Public Perception of Tobacco Public Relations Practices

Media coverage analyzing the tobacco industry’s public relations efforts is heavy and negative. Using any Internet search engine, the average person can find hundreds of articles and editorials reinforcing the belief that “Big Tobacco” is still practicing deceptive public relations, and the industry is not to be trusted. The media’s feedback to tobacco companies about their public relations efforts is well documented.

However, few studies have been done to document the general public’s perception of tobacco companies’ public relations efforts. The last five years have forever changed the way the tobacco industry can promote itself. The public perception of these promotional efforts deserves further study.

Purpose of a Study Researching Public Perception of Tobacco Public Relations Practices

A basic communication model includes an encoder, the message, noise, the decoder and feedback. Most studies since the MSA was passed have examined the cigarette companies (encoder), what cigarette companies are doing (the message), tobacco restrictions (noise), or who cigarette companies are targeting (decoders.) Few studies have been dedicated to studying feedback—how the public feels about the messages they are receiving. This study will examine the last step of the communication model.

The Problem

This study was designed to examine public perception of current tobacco industry public relations practices.

Procedures

A literature review was conducted of information about tobacco public relations. From that information, a survey was written. The survey was administered to 427 undergraduate Rowan University students, based on a random sample chosen by a 1 in k method from the spring 2003 schedule of courses booklet. Of the 427 surveys, 381 were valid.

Limitations

Of the 38 classes chosen for surveying, only 50 percent of professors contacted responded to the requests. (Professors were contacted twice by e-mail and once by a letter placed in their office mailboxes.) Of that 50 percent, some professors were unable to grant access to their classes for surveying (time limitations or students who only meet individually with the professor.)

The survey was initially intended to research the age group of 18-22. However, Institutional Research (IR) could not provide an age breakdown of the student body. Most students probably fell into the age range of 18-22, but there was no way the researcher could verify the age breakdown of the survey sample matched the age breakdown of Rowan University. So, the survey was restructured. The version filled out by students instead asked if the student was a freshman, sophomore, junior or senior.

The origin of most literature reviewed for this study came from anti-tobacco groups or negatively slanted media sources. Philip Morris and Brown & Williamson were
both contacted numerous times for this study, but neither responded. At the time of this study, tobacco companies’ Web sites had areas to submit e-mail inquiries, but every company’s capabilities for this were disabled. Many Web sites specifically stated they do not answer student inquiries.
Definitions of Study

Public Relations "The various activities and communications that organizations undertake to monitor, evaluate, influence and adjust to the attitudes, opinions and behaviors of groups or individuals who constitute their publics."

Tobacco Industry This refers to the overall group of companies in the United States that manufacture, market and sell tobacco products.

Key Communicators "A key communicator network is a network of opinion leaders who establish solid two-way communication between an organization and its publics. These opinion leaders talk to a lot of other people, and their audiences tend to listen to what they have to say. They agree to correct misinformation and to disseminate accurate information."

Public Opinion The opinion found through evaluation research that accurately reflects that of the public.

Big Tobacco A media reference to the tobacco industry, inferring its vastness and powerfulness.

Master Settlement Agreement "The Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) is an agreement signed in November 1998 by attorneys general in 46 states and five U.S. territories and the tobacco industry. The agreement resolved lawsuits filed by the attorneys general against the tobacco industry and provided the states funding intended for tobacco prevention and control. The agreement required tobacco companies to take down all billboard advertising and advertising in sports arenas, to stop using"

21 Doug Newson et al., This Is PR: The Realities of Public Relations. 7th edition, 2000.
cartoon characters to sell cigarettes and to make many of their internal
documents available to the public. The tobacco companies also agreed to
not market or promote their products to young people."\textsuperscript{23}

**Smoking Status** This study uses four classifications to define smoking status: smoker, non-smoker, ex-smoker and social smoker. Each classification chosen was self-reported by respondents, based on their own personal definitions. Therefore, no clear-cut definitions of each category are defined for this study.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

Previous Studies—Perception of Tobacco Industry’s Public Relations Practices

Only one previous study was found and identified as having studied perception of tobacco public relations campaigns. *Youth adults’ opinions of Philip Morris and its television advertising* was published in the summer 2002 volume journal Tobacco Control. Significant findings related to this research project are listed below.

**Study of Undergraduates at a California State University**²³

Researchers at Stanford University studied 218 undergraduate students to determine what they thought of Philip Morris and if those opinions affected how they felt about the company’s television advertising.

Before conducting the study, researchers found that 16 percent of the sample rated Philip Morris positively, 28 percent neutrally, and 56 percent negatively. About 57 percent of the sample identified Philip Morris as a tobacco manufacturer.

“Very few students volunteered the kind of skepticism about Philip Morris and its advertising that is a focus of California’s tobacco education program.”

“When asked what comes to mind when they think of Philip Morris, students typically mentioned tobacco without commenting on its marketing or the consequences of its use.”

However, students rated Philip Morris television advertisements more favorably when they were unaware that Philip Morris was a tobacco company.

**Perception of TV Ads—Even Though They’re Banned**

In August 2001, PR Newswire reported “a recent nationwide poll reveals that a staggering 54 percent of U.S. smokers aged 18-34 believe they’ve seen a television commercial for cigarettes within the last year. Another 30 percent believe they’ve seen this type of ad in the last five years.” However, this is not possible, as television cigarette advertising has been banned since December 30, 1970.24

**Outside Factors Influencing Public Perception**

In the last five years, the tobacco industry’s ability to promote its products has been greatly restricted and changed. The following information focuses on the changes that would influence today’s public perception of the tobacco industry’s public relations practices.

**Master Settlement Agreement**

Over the years, tobacco companies increasingly gained a reputation for deceptive practices. Public opinion gradually swayed toward regulating the industry’s public relations and promotional efforts. This public opinion came to a head in the 1990s, resulting in the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) being passed in 1998. The MSA was created to settle lawsuits filed by the attorneys general. The Agreement is between the tobacco industry and 46 states and five U.S. territories. The Agreement stipulates that the tobacco industry will pay the states $206 billion over 25 years, spend $1.5 billion in

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The Agreement drastically changed how tobacco companies were allowed to conduct business. Specifically, tobacco companies lost significant control over their public relations and advertising efforts. Section III of the MSA highlights the following restrictions:

(a) Prohibition on Youth Targeting
(b) Ban on Use of Cartoons
(c) Limitation of Tobacco Brand Name Sponsorships
(d) Elimination of Outdoor Advertising and Transit Advertising
(e) Prohibition on Payments Related to Tobacco Products and Media
(f) Ban on Tobacco Brand Name Merchandise
(g) Ban on Youth Access to Free Samples
(h) Ban on Gifts to Underage Persons Based on Proofs of Purchase
(i) Limitation on Third-Party Use of Brand Names
(j) Ban on Non-Tobacco Brand Names
(k) Minimum Pack Size of Twenty Cigarettes
(l) Corporate Culture Commitments Related to Youth Access and Consumption
(m) Limitations on Lobbying
(n) Restriction on Advocacy Concerning Settlement Proceeds
(o) Dissolution of the Tobacco Institute Inc., the Council for Tobacco Research—U.S.A., Inc. and the Center for Indoor Air Research Inc.
(p) Regulation and Oversight of New Tobacco-Related Trade Associations
(q) Prohibition on Agreements to Suppress Research
(r) Prohibition on Material Misrepresentations


Today’s Promotional Spending

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Report For 2000 (the most recent year available) shows the breakdown of the tobacco industry’s promotional spending. Below are the figures from 1998 (spending immediately before the MSA was passed) and 2000.

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<th>percentage this is of 1998 spending</th>
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<th>percentage this is of 2000 spending</th>
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<td>Promotional Allowances</td>
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<td>$309,610</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>-$61,074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Mail</td>
<td>$57,772</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>$92,902</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>-$35,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endorsements &amp; Testimonials</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coupons</td>
<td>$624,199</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>$805,299</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>-$181,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Added Value</td>
<td>$1,555,391</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>$3,516,490</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>+$1,961,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>$125</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>$949</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>+$824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$61,584</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>$63,395</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>+$1,811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,733,157</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>$9,574,731</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>+$2,841,574</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numbers show that the biggest jumps in promotional efforts were in the promotional allowances and retail added value areas of spending. The FTC defines promotional allowances as “payments made to retailers to facilitate sales”. Retail added value is defined as “offers such as ‘buy one, get one free’ or ‘buy three, get free T-shirt’
where the cigarette product and the bonus item are packaged together as a single unit.\textsuperscript{26}

The total amount of spending from 1998 to 2000 rose by $2.85 million, or by 42 percent.

**Today’s Promotional Campaigns**

Since the MSA was passed in 1998, cigarette companies have not only shifted their promotional dollars, but their promotional focus as well. Public opinion is still generally against tobacco companies—it will be difficult to undo what the public sees as decades of deception. Now, cigarette companies are striving to promote themselves by emphasizing not their product, but their positive contributions to society.

**Philip Morris: A New Image**

The most visible public relations campaign today is that of Philip Morris. In 2000, the cigarette company spent $150 million promoting its charitable and philanthropic good deeds through television advertisements. (The company spent $115 million accomplishing these good deeds.\textsuperscript{27})

But public sentiment against tobacco runs deep. Just as Philip Morris was donating money to charities and attempting to repair their image, the American Lung Association (ALA) of California ran an anti-Philip Morris campaign. On August 30, 2000, the ALA began the campaign by urging community organizations at seven news conferences to reject Philip Morris’s donations. Christine Bryant, board chair of the ALA of California said, “These donations allow the tobacco industry to hide behind the good names of organizations and attempt to buy their support on public policy issues. At the


same time, the tobacco industry is attempting to manipulate public opinion in its favor and buy the public’s respect by aggressively publicizing these donations.”28

In April 2001, Philip Morris began running the television advertisement known as “Molly’s Story” with the new slogan “Working to make a difference. The people of Philip Morris.”29 The advertisement recreates a Philip Morris employee’s trip with the company to Albania to donate Kraft food to refugees. (Philip Morris owns Kraft.) Director of Corporate Affairs Karen Brosius said of the advertisement, “It’s important for Philip Morris to get across the message that we’re more than a tobacco company, and that we have dedicated employees.”30

A similar advertisement, known as “Laura” shows viewers the story of Laura—a badly beaten woman nine months pregnant. The voice-over says, “All across the country, battered women and children are starting new lives, thanks in part to Philip Morris, one of the largest supporters of programs that feed, shelter, and counsel victims of domestic violence.”31

But again, Philip Morris encountered backlash to their campaign. Media reported that Philip Morris spent more on the “Molly” advertisement’s production than they did on actually donating food to the refugees. President of Oxfam America (a hunger relief

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charity) said of the commercial, “The idea that they’ve recreated a human tragedy to promote a corporate triumph strikes us as fundamentally offensive.”

John Stauber of PR Watch said of the advertisements:

Philip Morris is one of the largest corporate philanthropists year after year. There are two reasons they give so much. One reason is they kill hundreds of thousands of people with their products and have been doing so in a deceptive way for decades. It’s very necessary for them to give away money to worthwhile causes and groups to buy a cleaner image. And they understand that one thing they’re buying by dumping things into community groups is silence and acquiescence. People are not of the nature to bite the hand that feeds them.

Philip Morris is also abiding by the MSA when it comes to running anti-smoking campaigns aimed at youths. “Think. Don’t Smoke.” is the campaign slogan. The television advertisements using this slogan have been on television for over two years. Recent studies are beginning to show that these advertisements are not only ineffective at preventing smoking, but may be actually influencing youngsters to smoke.

Philip Morris also received backlash for another one of its youth anti-smoking tactics. In 2000, the cigarette company sent 26 million book covers to schools for student use. The book covers featured a colorful cartoon drawing of a snowboarder with the slogan “Don’t Wipe Out. Think. Don’t Smoke.” Critics of the book covers say they violate the MSA by both using a cartoon image and advertising directly to youth. They say the book covers entice youngsters instead of warning them about the dangers of smoking.

“The snowboard looks like a lit match. The clouds look like smoke. The mountains look like mounds of tobacco at an auction. The tobacco industry is still up to their old tricks of trying to attract children using different techniques,” said Gerald Kilbert, director of the California Education Department’s Healthy Kids Program.35

Bringing Promotional Events to Smokers

The tobacco industry has seen a shift away from traditional magazine advertising and toward bringing promotional events to smokers and their guests.

Philip Morris has continued its popular nine-year-old “Marlboro Miles” campaign (smokers earn ‘miles’ from each pack of cigarettes and redeem the ‘miles’ for promotional products.) But even Philip Morris has made innovations to this successful promotion. Now smokers can redeem their miles in-person at auctions held in bars around the country. This past fall, Philip Morris expanded the program by opening ‘trading post’ stores within bars where smokers can redeem their miles.36

Philip Morris also advertises a special event known as “Basic’s Antique Appraisal Fest.” This past June Philip Morris advertised the event for the southern New Jersey region. The event is advertised as, “Enjoy free food, games, antique displays, live entertainment and loads of fun. Admission is free and restricted to adult smokers and their guests.”37

In 2001, R.J. Reynolds sponsored 700 parties in 70 U.S. cities for smokers and their guests. Reaching customers directly is called “trend-influence marketing” by R.J. Reynolds, and is referred to as “relationship marketing” by Brown & Williamson. Both

37 Ibid.
companies also send marketing teams (usually young adults in their twenties) to give away free cigarettes at popular bars and nightclubs. In 1999, the tobacco industry gave away $33.7 million worth of free cigarettes. American Tobacco Co.’s Lucky Strike Force targets smokers as well. American’s marketing team gives hot coffee to cold smokers and hands out roses to them on Valentine’s Day.  

Matthew Myers, president of the National Center for Tobacco-Free Kids, said of the direct-to-consumer campaigns:

I think the surge of these under-the-radar-screen marketing campaigns to college-aged kids are an effort to bring new people into the market without attracting attention. This kind of marketing is so targeted that the 40-year-old who would be outraged by a mass media campaign wouldn’t even know it was going on. This kind of campaign is about hiding, about being able to run a massive public-relations campaign that you’re not encouraging young people to smoke while simultaneously appealing to them.

**Counter-marketing Organizations**

Anti-tobacco organizations have come into mainstream media the last few years. Groups such as American Legacy (www.americanlegacy.org), The Truth, (www.thetruth.com), Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (www.tobaccofreekids.org) and the Web site www.tobacco.org have gained momentum and more media coverage in recent years.

The American Legacy Foundation is the organization founded by the National Association of Attorneys General with the money the MSA mandated the tobacco industry give toward anti-smoking efforts. (Once firmly established, it will run independently.) Its four goals are: to reduce tobacco use among youths, to reduce

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39 Ibid.
exposure to secondhand smoke among all populations, to increase the successful quit rate among all ages, and to reduce disparities in access to prevention and cessation services and in exposure to secondhand smoke.\(^{40}\)

The strongest and most recognized of these groups is the ‘truth’ campaign. The campaign originated from Florida and has since gone national. Its purpose is to prevent at-risk youths aged 12-17 from beginning to smoke.\(^{41}\) After the first year of the campaign, the rate of middle school students smoking plummeted by 21 percent and the rate of high school students dropped by eight and a half percent.\(^{42}\) The campaign is so successful because its edgy messages to youth are created with input from other youths the same age. The key message used by the truth campaign is telling youngsters about the dangers of smoking, and that the tobacco industry knew about these practices, lied about their knowledge, and continued to deceptively market their product to kids.

One controversial—yet effective—commercial was known as “Body Bags.” The somber commercial showed body bags lined up, and graphically attributed the deaths to the tobacco industry. The commercial was so graphic, some television stations refused to run the ad. But a national telephone survey shows the positive results of “Body Bags,” and how teenagers reacted to the commercial. Ninety-two to 95 percent of teenagers who saw the ad thought it was convincing, 96 to 97 percent said it grabbed their attention, and 85 to 97 percent said it gave them a good reason not to smoke.\(^{43}\)

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids is specifically aimed toward lowering the smoking rate among youths. The organization posts frequent news releases on their Web site. Committee members are frequently quoted in news stories in the mainstream media as credible and reliable sources for information.

The Web site www.tobacco.org is an informational site run by the American Lung Association. The site is not publicized on television or print media as some of the other organizations are. But the site is a thorough and complete guide for the average person looking for any type of tobacco information—industry contacts, past news articles, ways to quit smoking, etc.

Previously Confidential Information Released

As a provision of the MSA, the tobacco industry must make public previously confidential correspondence. Web site links to the documents are easy to find using Internet search engines such as www.yahoo.com or www.google.com. The information in these documents sheds light on the internal practices of tobacco companies throughout the years. These documents can be viewed at Web sites such as Philip Morris (www.pmdocs.com), the Mangini collection of R.J. Reynolds marketing documents at the University of California at San Francisco (www.library.ucsf.edu/tobacco/mangini), Brown & Williamson (www.brownandwilliamson.com), R.J. Reynolds (www.rjrdocs.com) and Tobacco Documents Online (www.tobaccodocuments.org).

Damaging excerpts from these documents have been quoted as part of the truth’s television advertisements.
Smoking Rates

Smoking rates could be viewed as a form of feedback to the tobacco industry about their promotional efforts. However, many outside factors could contribute to these smoking rates, such as cigarette availability, the effect of counter-marketing, or the price of cigarettes. Smoking rates may or may not be viewed as feedback, but could give an indication toward public opinion (and acceptance) of tobacco.

The Journal of School Health reported “that substantial progress is being made toward achieving the national health objective for 2010 of reducing cigarette smoking rates among high school students.”\textsuperscript{44} From 1991 to 1997, the smoking rate among high school students rose. However, from 1997 to 2001, these numbers have dropped. “The prevalence of current smoking increased from 27.5 percent in 1991 to 36.4 percent in 1997 and then declined significantly to 28.5 percent in 2001. Current frequent smoking [defined as heavier smoking] increased from 12.7 percent in 1991 to 16.7 percent in 1997 and 16.8 percent in 1999 and then declined significantly to 13.8 percent in 2001.”\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
Chapter 3
Procedures

The researcher used four main sources to gather information for this study: online databases at Campbell Library at Rowan University, Internet search engines, a 1996 Rowan University thesis by Andrew Casper, "A Study of Public Relations Practice in the Tobacco Industry: Misuse and Social Responsibility", and surveys completed by Rowan University undergraduate students.

Literature Review

All online databases at Campbell Library were searched for information pertaining to tobacco and public relations. The key words used were a combination of "public relations", "PR", "tobacco", and "cigarettes." Nineteen articles were found that provided background to this topic, as well as current information about current tobacco public relations practices. Almost all 19 articles were found in the American Journal of Public Health.

Two relevant books were found in Campbell Library: The Father of Spin by Larry Tye and Smoking: Risk, Perception & Policy by Paul Slovic.

All sites provided relevant information. One Web site in particular proved to be the most helpful: www.tobacco.org. This Web site contains abstracts and full-text media listings of thousands of tobacco-related articles.

On this Web site, the researcher found two references to presentations about tobacco and public relations given by employees of the tobacco industry. "Under Siege: Public Relations in the Tobacco Industry" was presented to the Raleigh Public Relations Society on July 27, 1999, by Terry Hanson of community relations at Philip Morris. "How A Cigarette Maker Wins Respect & Good Will in Hostile Media Territory" was presented to Ragan Communications at the 2001 6th Annual Strategic PR Conference by Steve Kottak, manager of corporate communications at Brown & Williamson.

Both the Raleigh Public Relations Society and Ragan Communications were contacted. Both responded, but neither had information about these presentations or contact information for the presenters.

Terry Hanson and Steve Kottak’s telephone numbers were found using Yellow Pages on www.yahoo.com. Neither returned phone calls about these presentations.

The researcher used www.google.com to find full-text articles of the abstracts found on www.tobacco.org.

The 1996 thesis, "A Study of Public Relations Practice in the Tobacco Industry: Misuse and Social Responsibility" was reviewed for pertinent information. Current information or sources about tobacco public relations was not found.

A copy of the spring 2002 Campus Tobacco Use Survey administered by the Rowan University Tobacco Prevention Project was acquired. The responses for self-reported tobacco use were checked against results this study found.
Primary Research

A two-page 15-question survey was written based on the information found through the literature review. The questions asked respondents their opinions of specific tobacco public relations practices and their demographic information.

A total of 384 students needed to be surveyed for a margin of error of +/- five percent. The researcher used a one in k method to randomly choose classes to survey from Rowan University’s spring 2003 schedule of courses booklet available from the Registrar’s office.

Every 80th class was chosen to survey. The researcher went through the schedule of courses booklet twice using this method, choosing a total of 38 classes. The professors of all 38 classes were contacted and asked if the researcher could survey the class during the first two weeks of the spring 2003 semester. Approximately 50 percent of professors responded to this e-mail request. A letter was placed in the professors’ mailboxes who did not respond and a second e-mail was sent to them. From this second attempt, a few more professors responded. A total of 21 classes were surveyed, yielding 381 valid surveys and 46 invalid surveys.

Rowan University’s Institutional Research (IR) office was contacted. Information about number of students enrolled, course loads, major, ethnicity, gender, living arrangements (commuter or resident), and total enrollment by class level was available. An age breakdown of students was not available.

The information acquired was used to verify that the demographics of the sample surveyed match the demographics of the university’s population.
Once data was collected, the researcher used SPSS 11.0 to analyze the results.

Those results are available in Chapter 4.
Chapter 4

The researcher used SPSS 11.0 to analyze the data given in the student surveys. This data produced valid statistical results for each question within a margin of error of +/-5 percent with a confidence level of 95 percent.

Next, even further analysis was done. Questions one through 11 were cross-tabulated against each demographic or psychographic question in the survey (questions 12 through 15). This was done to find any statistical differences for each question within gender, smoking status, major, or class standing.

All results and statistically significant cross-tabulations are presented in this chapter. Each question is listed in bold print, with the results listed in the chart directly below the question. A brief analysis of the results is also listed. The sections following outline significant differences within each cross-tabulation—gender, smoking status, major, and class standing. Due to the volume of information in the major cross-tabulation, charts are provided. Each chart shows the question students were asked their opinion on along the horizontal axis and the demographic question (major) is along the vertical axis.
#1 What one option most closely reflects how you feel about public relations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Favorably</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Favorably</td>
<td>110</td>
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<td>Very Unfavorably</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over half (59.3 percent) the respondents felt neutrally about public relations. Over one-third of respondents felt “very favorably” or “favorably” about public relations. Approximately six percent of respondents felt “unfavorably” or “very unfavorably” toward public relations.

Gender cross-tabulation

When cross-tabulated, no significant differences were found within gender.

Smoking status cross-tabulation

Fifty percent of ex-smokers felt “favorably” about public relations, compared to 29 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation. Fewer ex-smokers felt neutrally about public relations (44 percent compared to 59 percent before cross-tabulation.)
Respondents whose majors fell within the College of Communication felt more favorably toward public relations. Twenty-six percent of these respondents felt “very favorably” toward public relations, compared to six percent before cross-tabulation. Forty percent of respondents within the College of Communication felt “favorably” toward public relations, compared to 29 percent before cross-tabulation.
Fewer respondents within the College of Engineering felt “very favorably” or “favorably” toward public relations. Before cross-tabulations, six percent of respondents felt “very favorably” and 29 percent felt “favorably.” Within the College of Engineering, no respondents felt “very favorably” and only 13.5 percent felt “favorably.”

Thirty-six percent of respondents within the College of Business felt “favorably” about public relations. This number is seven percent higher than responses before cross-tabulation. However, once “very favorably” and “favorably” responses are combined, this slight difference evens out. Thirty-eight percent of respondents within these majors felt “very favorably” or “favorably” toward public relations, compared to 35 percent before cross-tabulation.

Thirty-five percent of respondents felt either “very favorably” or “favorably” about public relations. Twenty-three percent of undecided majors responded this way.

Before cross-tabulation, 59 percent of respondents answered “neutral” when asked how they felt about public relations. When broken down by College, three differ significantly from these results. Thirty-one percent of College of Communication respondents, 84 percent of College of Engineering respondents, and 77 percent of undecided majors felt neutrally about public relations.

**Class standing cross-tabulation**

When cross-tabulated by class standing, fewer differences existed. Slightly fewer freshmen felt “favorably” (20 percent compared to 29 percent). However, significantly more freshmen answered “neutral” when asked how they felt about public relations (73 percent compared to 59 percent.)
#2 Do you recall seeing any TV commercials selling cigarettes within the past six months?

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>277</td>
<td>72.7</td>
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<td>Not Sure</td>
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<td>67</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Television commercials selling cigarettes have been banned for over 30 years. However, recent studies suggest that tobacco advertising is so strong that many people believe they’ve seen television cigarette commercials even though they haven’t.

When asked if they recall seeing any television commercials selling cigarettes within the past six months, a majority of respondents said “no” (73 percent.) However, almost 18 percent of respondents believe they’ve seen this advertising. Another 10 percent were not sure if they had seen this advertising.

**Gender cross-tabulation**

No significant differences were found within gender cross-tabulation.

**Smoking status cross-tabulation**

Slightly more social smokers said they had not seen television cigarette commercials within the last six months. Eighty percent responded this way, compared to 73 percent before cross-tabulation.

Within the four categories (smokers, social smokers, non-smokers and ex-smokers) the most significant difference for respondents who said they had seen television cigarette commercials was between smokers and social smokers. Twenty-one percent of smokers believe they saw these commercials, compared to the 13 percent of social smokers who said they saw these commercials.
Major cross-tabulation (Results shown by College)

Cross-tabulation of Question 2 and Question 14

Question #2, TV cigarette commercials

No respondents within the College of Fine & Performing Arts said they were “not sure” if they had seen this type of advertising. Before cross-tabulation 10 percent of respondents answered this way.

A significant percentage of undecided major respondents differed from the results found before cross-tabulation. Fifty-five percent said they did not see this type of advertising—compared to 73 percent of the respondents before cross-tabulation. Many
more undecided major respondents responded, "yes," that they had this advertising within the past six months. Thirty-six percent of respondents answered this way, compared to 18 percent before cross-tabulation—double the statistical average.

Class standing cross-tabulation

Responses from freshmen and seniors differed from the statistics before cross-tabulation. Slightly fewer freshmen said they had not seen this advertising (66 percent compared to 73 percent.) Significantly more seniors reported that they had not seen television cigarette commercials—82 percent compared to 73 percent before cross-tabulation.
#3 Do you believe tobacco companies are honest with the public about their tobacco products?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>307</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A majority of respondents—80 percent—felt that tobacco companies are not honest with the public about their tobacco products. Approximately 12 percent believe tobacco companies are honest about their products. About eight percent of respondents replied "not sure" when asked their opinion about this subject.

**Gender cross-tabulation**

No significant differences were found within gender cross-tabulation.

**Smoking status cross-tabulation**

Fewer smokers feel tobacco companies are not honest with the public about their tobacco products (68 percent compared to 81 percent before cross-tabulation.) However, more ex-smokers feel tobacco companies are not honest with the public. Eighty-nine percent of ex-smokers felt this way (compared to 81 percent before cross-tabulation.)
The most significant differences were found within the College of Fine & Performing Arts and undecided majors.

No respondents within the College of Fine & Performing Arts felt tobacco companies are honest with the public about their tobacco products. Before cross-tabulation, approximately 12 percent of respondents answered this way.

Respondents with undecided majors differ significantly in all opinions on this subject. Fewer answered that tobacco companies are honest (59 percent compared to 80
percent before cross-tabulation); more were not sure if tobacco companies are honest (18 percent compared to eight percent before cross-tabulation); and more felt tobacco companies are honest (23 percent compared to 12 percent before cross-tabulation).

**Class standing cross-tabulation**

No significant differences were found within class standing cross-tabulation.
#4 In your opinion, should tobacco companies run their own anti-smoking TV advertisements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Slightly more than half of the respondents felt tobacco companies should not run their own anti-smoking television advertisements. Thirty percent felt tobacco companies should run their own anti-smoking television advertisements. Twenty percent were not sure if tobacco companies should run their own anti-smoking television advertisements.

**Gender cross-tabulation**

Fifteen percent more males than females said tobacco companies should not run their own anti-smoking television advertisements. (Forty-five percent of females versus 60 percent of males.)

Significantly more females than males responded “not sure” when asked their opinion on this subject. Twenty-five percent of females responded this way, compared to 11 percent of males.

**Smoking status cross-tabulation**

Compared to other smoking statuses, more ex-smokers believed tobacco companies should run their own anti-smoking television advertisements. (Forty-four percent versus thirty percent before cross-tabulation.)

Also, fewer ex-smokers answered “no,” tobacco companies should not run their own anti-smoking television advertisements. Thirty-nine percent of ex-smokers responded this way, compared to 51 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.
Question #4, Should 'Big Tobacco' run anti-smoking ads?

Both College of Business and College of Engineering respondents more frequently answered "no," tobacco companies should not run their own anti-smoking television advertisements. Sixty-five percent of College of Business respondents and 68 percent of College of Engineering respondents answered this way. These percentages are compared against the 51 percent found before cross-tabulation.
Both of these Colleges also had lower percentages of students who believed “yes,” tobacco companies should run their own anti-smoking television advertisements. Twenty percent of College of Business respondents and 19 percent of College of Engineering respondents answered this way. These percentages are compared against the 30 percent found before cross-tabulation.

A higher percentage of College of Education respondents believed tobacco companies should run their own anti-smoking television advertisements. Thirty-nine percent of respondents answered this way, compared to 30 percent before cross-tabulation.

More students within the College of Fine & Performing Arts answered “not sure” when asked if, in their opinion, tobacco companies should run their own anti-smoking television advertisements. Forty-four percent of respondents answered “not sure,” compared to 19 percent before cross-tabulation.

No one within the College of Fine & Performing Arts survey sample answered “yes,” tobacco companies should run their own anti-smoking television advertisements. This is compared to the 30 percent of respondents who answered “yes” before cross-tabulation.

Class standing cross-tabulation

Compared to percentages found before cross-tabulation, more freshmen and fewer juniors said “no,” tobacco companies should not run their own anti-smoking television advertisements. Sixty-two percent of freshmen and 41 percent of juniors responded this way, compared to 51 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.
#5 Do you believe tobacco companies should be allowed to promote their products by sponsoring private parties for customers and their guests?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost half the respondents (47 percent) believe tobacco companies should be allowed to promote their products by sponsoring private parties for customers and their guests. Thirty-nine percent believe tobacco companies should not be allowed to sponsor these parties. Fourteen percent of respondents were not sure if they felt tobacco companies should be allowed to sponsor these parties.

**Gender cross-tabulation**

Male and female respondents answered this question differently. Forty-five percent of males said “no,” tobacco companies should not be allowed to sponsor these promotional parties. Only 29 percent of females said “no.”

Twenty percent more females than males said “yes,” tobacco companies should be allowed to promote their products by sponsoring private parties for their customers and guests. (Thirty-nine percent of male respondents compared to 59 percent of female respondents.)

**Smoking status cross-tabulation**

Compared to other smoking statuses, smokers were more likely to believe tobacco companies should be allowed to promote their products by sponsoring private parties for their customers and guests. Only 16 percent said “no,” tobacco companies should not be allowed to do this (compared to 39 percent before cross-tabulation.) Seventy-one percent
said "yes," tobacco companies should be allowed to sponsor these parties (compared to 47 percent before cross-tabulation.)

Of the four statuses, ex-smokers were least likely to respond "yes," tobacco companies should be allowed to sponsor these promotional parties. Thirty-nine percent of ex-smokers answered this way, compared to 47 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.
Cross-tabulation of Question 5 and Question 14

Question #5, Should tobacco host promotional parties?

Only the responses from College of Communication and College of Liberal Arts & Sciences students fell within the statistical average after cross-tabulation.

Significantly more College of Business respondents said "yes," tobacco companies should be allowed to sponsor private promotional parties. Fifty-eight percent answered this way, compared to 47 percent before cross-tabulation.
College of Education respondents more often answered "no," tobacco companies should not be allowed to sponsor these parties. Fifty-seven percent of respondents felt this way, compared to 39 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.

Fewer College of Education respondents answered "yes," tobacco companies should be allowed to sponsor these promotional parties. Only 32 percent responded "yes," compared to 47 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.

Fewer College of Engineering respondents said "no," these parties should not be allowed. Twenty-seven percent said "no," compared to 39 percent before cross-tabulation.

Also, more College of Engineering respondents were not sure if these parties should be allowed. Twenty-two percent of respondents answered this way (compared to 14 percent before cross-tabulation.)

Within the College of Fine & Performing Arts, more answered "not sure" and fewer answered "yes," these parties should be allowed. Twenty-two percent responded "not sure," compared to 14 percent before cross-tabulation. Thirty-three percent said "yes," these parties should be allowed—compared to 47 percent before cross-tabulation.

Class standing cross-tabulation

Sophomores were the only class to respond outside the percentages found before cross-tabulation. A larger percentage said "no," these parties should not be allowed (52 percent compared to 39 percent before cross-tabulation.) A smaller percentage said "yes," these parties should be allowed (35 percent compared to 47 percent before cross-tabulation.)
#6 Do you believe tobacco companies should be allowed to run TV commercials to tell the public about their charitable acts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost the same percentage of respondents answered “no” and “yes” to this question—if they believe tobacco companies should be allowed to run television commercials to tell the public about their charitable acts. Forty-five percent of respondents said “no” and 41 percent said “yes.” Fourteen percent of respondents answered “not sure.”

**Gender cross-tabulation**

Twenty percent more males than females believed “yes,” tobacco companies should be allowed to run television commercials to tell the public about their charitable acts. Fifty-three percent of males answered “yes,” while 33 percent of females answered “yes.”

Eleven percent more females than males said they were “not sure” if these commercials should be allowed. (Nineteen percent of females responded this way compared to eight percent of males.)

Eleven percent more females than males also said “no,” these commercials should not be allowed. Almost half of female respondents said “no” (49 percent), compared to 38 percent of males.
Smoking status cross-tabulation

Fewer than average smokers believed tobacco companies should not be allowed to run these commercials telling the public about their charitable acts. Twenty-eight percent of smokers responded this way, compared to 45 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.

More smokers said these commercials should be allowed to run. Half the smokers surveyed said these commercials should be allowed—compared to 41 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation. Smokers were the only category in which more respondents said “yes” rather than “no,” to whether these commercials should be allowed.

Social smokers were least likely to answer “yes,” these commercials should be allowed. Only 27 percent responded this way, compared to 41 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.

More social smokers said they were “not sure” if these commercials should be allowed. A little over one-quarter of respondents (26 percent) answered “not sure.”

Ex-smokers were least likely to respond “not sure.” Six percent answered this way, compared to 14 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.

Class standing cross-tabulation

No statistical differences were found when cross-tabulated by class.
Major cross-tabulation (Results shown by College)

Cross-tabulation of Question 6 and Question 14

Question #6, Should commercials about charity be allowed?

When asked if tobacco companies should be allowed to run television commercials to tell the public about their charitable acts, a higher percentage of College of Business respondents said "yes." Fifty-one percent of College of Business respondents answered this way, compared to 41 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.

College of Education majors were more likely to answer "no," these commercials should not be allowed. (Fifty-five percent compared to 45 percent before cross-tabulation.)
College of Engineering students were less likely to answer "no," these commercials should not be allowed. (Thirty-two percent compared to 45 percent before cross-tabulation.)
Almost three-quarters of respondents said "yes," the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) should regulate tobacco products.

Nineteen percent said "no," and nine percent said they were "not sure."

**Gender cross-tabulation**

No significant differences were found within this gender cross-tabulation.

**Smoking status cross-tabulation**

A higher percentage of smokers answered "not sure" when asked if the FDA should regulate tobacco. Twenty-one percent answered this way, compared to nine percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.

Ex-smokers and social smokers had higher percentages answering "no," the FDA should not regulate tobacco. Thirty-eight percent of social smokers and 28 percent of ex-smokers responded this way, compared to 19 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.

Smokers were least likely to say "yes" the FDA should regulate tobacco (55 percent). Non-smokers were the most likely to say "yes" the FDA should regulate tobacco (79 percent.)
Major cross-tabulation (Results shown by College)

Cross-tabulation of Question 7 and Question 14

Question #14, major
- College of Business
- College of Communication
- College of Education
- College of Engineering
- College of Fine & Performing Arts
- College of LA & S
- Undecided

Question #7, Should FDA regulate tobacco?

Both the College of Fine & Performing Arts and undecided major respondents were more likely to answer “not sure” when compared to the other majors. Twenty-two percent of College of Fine & Performing Arts major respondents answered “not sure.” Eighteen percent of undecided major respondents answered this way. (This is compared to nine percent before cross-tabulation.)
College of Business respondents were the least likely to respond “not sure”—only three percent of respondents did so. (This is compared to nine percent before cross-tabulation.)

College of Engineering and undecided major respondents were less likely to answer “yes,” the FDA should regulate tobacco. Sixty-five percent of College of Engineering respondents answered this way. Fifty-nine percent of undecided major respondents answered this way. This is compared to 72 percent of respondents answering this way before cross-tabulation.

**Class standing cross-tabulation**

No statistical differences were found within this class standing cross-tabulation.
#8 Do you think tobacco companies should be allowed to send free ‘anti-smoking’
book covers to schools that have a cartoon image on the cover?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost half of respondents surveyed said “yes,” tobacco companies should be allowed to send free book covers to schools (for student use), that use a cartoon image in an anti-smoking message. A little over one-third of respondents disagreed, and said “no,” tobacco companies should not be allowed to do this. Fourteen percent of respondents were not sure if tobacco companies should be allowed to send the book covers.

**Gender cross-tabulation**

Fifty-seven percent of male respondents answered “yes,” compared to 41 percent of females.

**Smoking status cross-tabulation**

Social smokers were more likely to answer “no,” tobacco companies should not be allowed to send these free book covers. Forty-five percent answered this way. Smokers were least likely to answer “no”—only 29 percent did so. This compares to 38 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.

Fifty-eight percent of smokers said “yes,” tobacco companies should be allowed to send these book covers. Thirty-eight percent of social smokers responded this way. Forty-eight percent of respondents answered this way before cross-tabulation.
Major cross-tabulation (Results shown by College)

Cross-tabulation of Question 8 and Question 14

Question #8, Should tobacco industry send book covers?

Respondents within the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences were least likely to respond “no” to this question, with approximately 32 percent answering this way. Respondents within the College of Education were most likely to say “no”—46 percent responded this way (15 percent more than College of Liberal Arts & Sciences respondents.)
Undecided majors were least likely to respond “not sure”—nobody within this category responded this way.

College of Business and College of Education respondents were least likely to answer “yes” to this question. Thirty-six percent and 32 percent, respectively, answered this way. Undecided major respondents were most likely to say “yes,” tobacco companies should be allowed to send these free book covers to schools. Sixty-four percent responded this way, compared to the statistical average of 48 percent before cross-tabulation.

**Class standing cross-tabulation**

Sophomores were least likely to say “no,” tobacco companies should not send these free book covers to schools. Twenty-nine percent responded this way, compared to the statistical average of 38 percent before cross-tabulation.

Freshmen were least likely to respond “not sure” to this question. No respondents within this class responded this way, compared to the statistical average of 14 percent before cross-tabulation.
#9 Do you believe cigarette smoking should be shown in movies and TV shows?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not As Much</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost half the respondents surveyed answered “yes,” cigarette smoking should be shown in movies and TV shows. Only 10 percent of respondents disagreed, answering “no,” cigarette smoking should not be shown in movies and TV shows. A little under one-third (31 percent) felt not as much smoking should be shown. Twelve percent were “not sure” when answering this question.

Gender cross-tabulation

Female respondents were more inclined than male respondents to answer “not as much” smoking should be shown in movies and TV shows. Forty-one percent of females responded this way, compared to 17 percent of males.

Significantly more males than females answered “yes,” smoking should be shown in movies and TV shows. Sixty-six percent of males responded this way, compared to 33 percent of females.

Smoking status cross-tabulation

When cross-tabulated by smoking status, significant differences were found within the responses of “not as much” and “yes.”

Before cross-tabulation, approximately 31 percent of respondents felt that “not as much” smoking should be shown in movies and on TV. When cross-tabulated by smoking status, results varied significantly. Only 13 percent of smokers and 20 percent of
social smokers responded “not as much.” However, half the ex-smokers (50 percent) felt “not as much” smoking should be shown in movies and on TV. Non-smoker responses fell within the regular statistical range found before cross-tabulation.

**Major cross-tabulation (Results shown by College)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College of Business</th>
<th>College of Communication</th>
<th>College of Education</th>
<th>College of Engineering</th>
<th>College of Fine &amp; Performing Arts</th>
<th>College of LA &amp; S</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not as much</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not sure</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question #9, Should smoking be shown in movies/TV?**

Statistically significant differences were found within this cross-tabulation. More respondents than the statistical norm within the College of Education said “no,” smoking should not be shown in movies and TV shows. Twenty-one percent responded this way, compared to 10 percent before cross-tabulation.
Fewer respondents than the statistical norm within the College of Engineering said “not as much” smoking should be shown in movies and on TV. Sixteen percent responded this way, compared to 31 percent before cross-tabulation.

Within the option “not sure,” both College of Business and College of Engineering student respondents fell outside the statistical norm. College of Business respondents were less inclined to answer this way—just three percent responded this way, compared to the statistical average of 12 percent. College of Engineering students, on the other hand, were more inclined to respond “not sure” to this question. Twenty-two percent responded this way, compared to 12 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.

Many more College of Business respondents than average responded “yes,” smoking should be shown in movies and on TV shows. Sixty-two percent responded this way, compared to 46 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation. The trend within College of Communication and College of Education respondents swung the other way. Fewer students within these two Colleges responded “yes” to this question. Just 36 percent of College of Communication respondents and 27 percent of College of Education respondents answered this way.

**Class standing cross-tabulation**

The only statistically significant differences found within this cross-tabulation were within student responses answering “yes,” smoking should be shown in movies and on TV shows. Before cross-tabulation, 46 percent of students said “yes,” smoking should be shown in movies and on TV shows. But when cross-tabulated, the results show a
divide within the classes. Significantly more freshmen and senior students said “yes” (52 percent and 56 percent), while significantly fewer sophomores and juniors said “yes” (both 38 percent each.)
How do you perceive the practice of public relations in the tobacco industry?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Favorably</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorably</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorably</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Unfavorably</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overwhelming majority of student respondents feel neutrally toward the practice of public relations in the tobacco industry. Sixty-eight percent responded this way. Less than one percent felt “very favorably,” six percent felt “favorably,” 22 percent felt “unfavorably,” and about three percent felt “very unfavorably.”

Gender cross-tabulation

No statistically significant differences were found within this cross-tabulation.

Smoking status cross-tabulation

Only ex-smoker responses fell outside the statistic norm after cross-tabulation. Significantly more ex-smokers than any other group responded they felt neutrally about the practice of public relations within the tobacco industry. Eighty-three percent responded this way, compared to 68 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.

Class standing cross-tabulation

No statistical differences were found within this cross-tabulation.
Few statistical differences were found within this cross-tabulation. College of Education respondents answered "neutral" slightly less than other respondents. Fifty-nine percent of College of Education respondents answered this way, compared to the statistical average of 68 percent before cross-tabulation. Also, College of Fine & Performing Arts respondents were slightly less inclined to answer they view tobacco
public relations as “unfavorably.” Eleven percent responded this way, compared to 23 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.
Which one group do you believe tobacco companies are currently trying to target the MOST through their advertising?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Non-Smokers</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minors to Begin Smoking</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smokers to Switch Brands</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over half the respondents (58 percent) said they felt tobacco companies are currently targeting minors with their advertising to entice them to begin smoking. Almost one-third of respondents, 32 percent, felt tobacco companies are using their advertising to try to target smokers to switch brands. Ten percent believe tobacco advertising currently targets adult non-smokers.

Gender cross-tabulation

No statistical differences were found within this cross-tabulation.

Smoking status cross-tabulation

Fewer social smokers than the statistical average felt that tobacco companies are currently targeting adult non-smokers the most through their advertising. Six percent responded this way, compared to 10 percent before cross-tabulation.

Fewer smokers than the statistical average felt that tobacco companies’ advertising focus is to target minors to begin smoking. Thirty-seven percent of respondents who smoke answered this way, compared to 58 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.
Of the four categories, non-smokers had the fewest percentage of respondents that believe tobacco companies are targeting smokers to switch brands. The highest percentage of respondents who believe tobacco companies target smokers to switch brands were smokers.

**Major cross-tabulation (Results shown by College)**

**Cross-tabulation of Question 11 and Question 14**

A few statistical differences were found within this cross-tabulation. Higher percentages of respondents within the College of Engineering and College of Fine &
Performing Arts said tobacco companies target “adult non-smokers” the most through their advertising. Nineteen percent of College of Engineering respondents answered this way, as well as 22 percent of College of Fine & Performing Arts respondents. Ten percent was the statistical average before cross-tabulation.

College of Fine & Performing Arts respondents also had a lower percentage of students answer that tobacco companies target “smokers to switch brands” the most through their advertising. Twenty-two percent responded this way, compared to 32 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.

A noticeably higher percentage of undecided majors responded that they feel tobacco companies target “minors to begin smoking” the most through their advertising. Seventy-three percent of respondents answered this way, compared to 58 percent before cross-tabulation.

Class standing cross-tabulation

The only class that responded outside the statistical average was the sophomore class. A higher percentage responded that tobacco companies target “minors to begin smoking” and a lower percentage said tobacco companies target “smokers to switch brands.” Seventy-one percent of sophomore respondents said tobacco companies target minors the most, compared to 58 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation. Twenty-two percent of sophomore respondents said tobacco companies target smokers to switch brands, compared to 32 percent of respondents before cross-tabulation.
#12 What is your gender?

Information provided by IR showed the gender breakdown of the undergraduate population as 57.4 percent female and 42.6 percent male.

The gender breakdown of this survey was 59.6 percent female and 40.4 percent male.

#13 Which group do you consider yourself a part of?

During the spring 2002 semester one year earlier, the New Jersey Higher Education Consortium sponsored a Campus Tobacco Use Survey on Rowan University's campus. The survey found that 11.6 percent of freshmen, 15.1 percent of sophomores, 25 percent of juniors, and 21.9 percent of seniors considered themselves smokers.

The smoking status breakdown of this survey was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freshmen</th>
<th>Sophomores</th>
<th>Juniors</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Smoker</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoker</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Smoker</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-Smoker</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
#14 What is your major?

Student respondents were asked to fill in this open-ended question that asked their major. The researcher then took those answers and categorized them by College.

The College and category breakdown of Rowan University is listed below. The column labeled “IR” indicates the percentages calculated from Research Briefings, Rowan University’s office of Institutional Research’s twice-yearly publication. The column labeled “This study” indicates the percentages of student surveys that came from each College and category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College of Business</th>
<th>IR</th>
<th>This study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of Communication</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Education</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Engineering</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Fine &amp; Performing Arts</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Liberal Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-major/non-matriculated</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
#15 What is your class standing?

Students were asked to circle the option that best described their class standing: freshmen, sophomore, junior or senior.

The class standing breakdown of Rowan University is listed below. The column labeled “IR” indicates the percentages calculated from Research Briefings, Rowan University’s office of Institutional Research’s twice-yearly publication. The column labeled “This study” indicates the percentages of student surveys that came from each class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>IR</th>
<th>This study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>18.2 percent</td>
<td>22.3 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomores</td>
<td>22.6 percent</td>
<td>17.8 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors</td>
<td>28.1 percent</td>
<td>31.8 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>31.0 percent</td>
<td>28.1 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5

Significant Findings

Opinion of Public Relations

Overwhelmingly, the students surveyed felt “neutrally” about public relations in general, and about the practice of public relations in the tobacco industry. However, just fewer than six percent of student surveyed felt “unfavorably” or “very unfavorably” toward public relations, while just over 25 percent felt “unfavorably” or “very unfavorably” toward the practice of public relations in the tobacco industry.

#1 & #10 What one option most closely reflects how you feel about public relations/tobacco public relations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent (Question 1, public relations)</th>
<th>Percent (Question 10, tobacco public relations)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Favorably</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorably</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorably</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Unfavorably</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TV Cigarette Advertising

Approximately 18 percent of students surveyed believed that within the past six months they had seen television commercials selling cigarettes. This type of advertising has been banned since December 30, 1970.

Smokers were most likely to say they had seen this advertising (21 percent), while social smokers were least likely to say they had seen this advertising (13 percent).
Are Tobacco Companies Honest About Their Products?

Eighty percent of students surveyed believe that tobacco companies are not honest about the products they sell.

Tobacco Industry-Run Anti-Smoking TV Advertisements

Just over half the students surveyed felt that the tobacco industry should not run its own anti-smoking advertisements on television.

Tobacco Sponsored Promotional Parties

Just under half the students surveyed felt that tobacco companies should be allowed to host their own promotional parties for customers and guests. Thirty-nine percent of male students responded this way, compared to 59 percent of female students.

Tobacco Industry TV Advertisements About Charity

The students surveyed were divided on this issue. Almost the same percentage of respondents answered “no” and “yes” to this question—if they believe tobacco companies should be allowed to run television commercials to tell the public about their charitable acts. Forty-five percent said “no” and 41 percent said “yes.”

Free Book Covers, Using Cartoon Image

The students surveyed were also divided on this issue. Forty-eight percent felt that tobacco companies should not be allowed to send free ‘anti-smoking’ book covers to schools that have a cartoon image on the cover. Thirty-eight percent of respondents believed tobacco companies should be allowed to send these free book covers.
Cigarette Smoking on TV, in Movies

Almost half the students surveyed felt that cigarette smoking should still be allowed to be shown on television and in movies.

Whom Does Cigarette Advertising Target?

Fifty-eight percent of respondents believed tobacco companies target minors the most through their advertising.

Do You Smoke?

Six percent of freshmen, 3 percent of sophomores, 12 percent of juniors, and 15 percent of seniors consider themselves smokers. An additional 9 percent of freshmen, 13 percent of sophomores, 17 percent of juniors and 17 percent of seniors consider themselves social smokers.

Conclusions

This survey found that opinions vary greatly about tobacco industry public relations practices.

In general, students felt that the tobacco industry is not honest. They felt that the industry should not run its own anti-smoking television advertising. They believed the tobacco industry still uses its advertising to entice minors to begin smoking.

Yet, despite these negative opinions, not an overwhelming percentage of students felt “unfavorably” or “very unfavorably” toward the tobacco industry’s practice of public relations.

Students were divided when asked their opinions about current tobacco industry public relations practices. Specifically, student response was divided when asked if
tobacco companies should be allowed to host promotional parties, show television commercials about charity, and send free book covers to schools.

Survey Limitations

Due to time constraints, the survey was not pre-tested beforehand. This led to a few problems within the survey that might have been caught if pre-testing was done.

- Students surveyed may not have been aware of what public relations is, therefore skewing the results of the survey.

- The second question should not have been asked at the beginning of the survey. ("Do you recall seeing any TV commercials selling cigarettes within the past six months?") Classroom observation caught a few students snickering over this question—students who were aware that this advertising is banned and thought the researcher was not aware of the ban. This may have led to a lack of credibility, therefore skewing the results of the survey.

- For some students, reading the questions about specific public relations practices may have been their first exposure to the subject matter. Each student may have interpreted the question differently, possibly skewing the results.

- When asked if the FDA should regulate tobacco, 72 percent said “yes.” The respondents were not asked if they knew that another agency already regulates tobacco. The question may have led some respondents to believe that tobacco is not regulated.
Other Limitations

This study was unable to provide the tobacco industry’s viewpoint of its practice of public relations. Attempts were made to get copies of presentations on this subject. However, the tobacco companies contacted were reluctant to release any information.

Although 427 students were surveyed, only 381 surveys were valid. (Invalid surveys included surveys inadvertently filled out by graduate or non-matriculated students, or surveys not completely filled out.) A total of 384 surveys were needed to secure a margin of error of +/- 5 percent with a 95 percent confidence level.

Recommendations

A few different approaches to the same topic may prove to be interesting studies:

- A content analysis of media coverage of tobacco industry public relations practices.
- A focus group approach to analyzing responses to different types of Philip Morris commercials.
- A study analyzing the effectiveness of Philip Morris’s youth anti-smoking television commercials.


Survey

A Rowan public relations graduate student is conducting the following survey. Its purpose is to gather information on student opinion of the tobacco industry's public relations efforts. Your participation is voluntary, and greatly appreciated. The survey will only take a few minutes to complete and is anonymous. Thank you for your time.

1. What one option most closely reflects how you feel about public relations?
   Very Favorably
   Favorably
   Neutral
   Unfavorably
   Very Unfavorably

2. Do you recall seeing any TV commercials selling cigarettes within the past six months?
   Yes
   No
   Not Sure

3. Do you believe tobacco companies are honest with the public about their tobacco products?
   Yes
   No
   Not Sure

4. In your opinion, should tobacco companies run their own anti-smoking TV advertisements?
   Yes
   No
   Not Sure

5. Do you believe tobacco companies should be allowed to promote their products by sponsoring private parties for customers and their guests?
   Yes
   No
   Not Sure

6. Do you believe tobacco companies should be allowed to run TV commercials to tell the public about their charitable acts?
   Yes
   No
   Not Sure

7. Should the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulate tobacco products?
   Yes
   No
   Not Sure

8. Do you think tobacco companies should be allowed to send free book covers to schools (for student use), that use a cartoon image in an anti-smoking message?
   Yes
   No
   Not Sure

9. Do you believe cigarette smoking should be shown in movies and TV shows?
   Yes
   No
   Not As Much
   Not Sure

(Please see more questions on next page)
10. How do you perceive the practice of public relations in the tobacco industry?
   Very Favorably
   Favorably
   Neutral
   Unfavorably
   Very Unfavorably

11. Which one group do you believe tobacco companies are currently trying to target the MOST through their advertising?
   a. Smokers to switch to their brand.
   b. Adult non-smokers to begin smoking.
   c. Minors under age 18 to begin smoking.

12. What is your gender?
   Female    Male

13. Which group do you consider yourself part of?
   Non-smokers    Smokers    Social Smokers    Ex-smokers

14. What is your major?

15. What is your class standing?
   Freshman    Sophomore    Junior    Senior

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.