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TOBACCO MARKETING UPDATE

What's New in Tobacco Marketing?

Performative Tobacco Industry Greenwashing Continues



Above: Email received from Natural American Spirit on Aug. 8, 2023 about respecting the Earth.

Many tobacco brands continued to “champion” environmental justice in their 2023 marketing campaigns without acknowledging the devastating role the industry plays in climate change. The result is obvious performative greenwashing.

An August 8 email from Natural American Spirit invites consumers to learn about their environmental initiatives, claiming that they proceed with a “spirit of working in harmony with nature.” Nothing says “harmony” or “respect for the Earth” like [cutting down over 600 million trees each year](#) to make room for tobacco crops.

A similar email from Marlboro has a simple message: “Protect Our Water.” But encouraging customers to save water and build their DIY Rain Barrel project does nothing to offset the industry’s use of over [22 billion tons of water for cigarette production](#) each year or clean up the [millions of cigarette butts](#) that end up polluting beaches and waterways worldwide.

Below: Email received from Marlboro on Mar. 10, 2023 about protecting water sources.



New Year, New “Nicotine Routine” from Lucy and Mi-Pod

MAKE 2024 A YEAR OF BETTER NICOTINE SOLUTIONS

MAYBE YOU NEED SOMETHING CLEANER, SOMETHING STRONGER, OR JUST SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

WHATEVER THAT SOMETHING IS, LUCY HAS A VARIETY OF FLAVORFUL OPTIONS TO TAKE YOUR NICOTINE ROUTINE TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

ALWAYS TOBACCO-FREE

Both Lucy and Mi-Pod sent resolution-themed ads around the New Year to appeal to customers who may be thinking about quitting smoking or vaping in 2024. They offer “cleaner,” “tobacco-free” alternatives or products with less nicotine, hoping that customers will switch

to their products rather than quit altogether. Lucy’s lozenges are the only FDA-approved cessation product they offer, and [none of Mi-Pod’s products are FDA-approved.](#)

Right: Email received from Mi-Pod on Dec. 30, 2023 with the subject line “Dropping Your Nicotine in 2024? We’ve Got You Covered.”



Above: Email received from Lucy on Dec. 29, 2023 about bringing “better nicotine solutions” into the new year.



TOBACCO MARKETING UPDATE

Questions or want to subscribe?
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Holiday Hypocrisy: The Industry “Gives Back” to the Community

Tobacco and e-cigarette companies often host community events and donate large sums of money to “give back” to the community. Meanwhile, they gloss over the many ways their products harm individuals and communities. No matter how hard the industry tries, it can’t make up for its damage. These acts of “philanthropy” are a lot like greenwashing: shallow attempts to clean up the industry’s image.

Loon Thanksgiving Turkey Drive



Above: Loon Turkey Drive poster received via email on Nov. 3, 2023. Loon posted this image on their social media on the same day.

Loon, a Minnesota-based e-cigarette company, held its first annual turkey drive a few weeks before Thanksgiving. They partnered with local organizations, including two nonprofit food pantries, to distribute turkeys in the Twin Cities. Loon posted multiple videos on their social media throughout the day, including videos of their (unrefrigerated) truck carrying the turkeys and the people waiting in lines to receive one. Hashtags on their posts include #giftofgiving, #forthepeople, and #charity.

Loon Toy Drive

Loon hosted a toy drive in December and gave an online coupon code to anyone who donated. As of late January, Loon has not shared how much money was raised, how the donations were spent, or where and to whom the toys were distributed. A toy drive is an interesting choice for a company that cannot sell or market to anyone younger than age 21.



Left: Loon shared this list of event sponsors in the same email received on Nov. 3, 2023.

Right: Email received from Loon on Dec. 7, 2023 about their 2nd annual toy drive. The email included a 20% code for anyone who donated.

Marlboro’s Giving Tuesday Poll

Marlboro donated \$25K to three nonprofit organizations on Giving Tuesday: Feeding America, the National Urban League, and Keep America Beautiful. They also held a vote to let customers decide which of the three would receive an extra \$25K donation. Feeding America won the poll. For some perspective, Altria Group, the US parent company of Marlboro, brought in \$6.281B in Q3 of 2023 alone.

Right: Email received from Marlboro on Nov. 28, 2023 inviting customers to vote for the organization they want to give an extra \$25K donation.

Far Right: Email received from Marlboro on Dec. 7, 2023 announcing that Feeding America earned the extra \$25K donation based on votes.

