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TOBACCO MARKETING UPDATE

Reducing Youth Exposure to Tobacco Advertising and Promotion

FDA plans to remove menthol cigarettes from the market

By *BETSY BROCK*

In November, FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, M.D., announced that the agency is planning to remove menthol cigarettes from the marketplace. Public health advocates and tobacco control organizations across the country celebrated the announcement because menthol makes tobacco easier to start and harder to quit. However, this FDA action is likely to take years and will face a fierce challenge by the tobacco industry as menthol makes up 35% of the cigarette market share. As a first step, the FDA will need to publicly announce the proposed new rule. This will be followed by a public comment period. Analysts speculate that any policy could take at least two years to be adopted and implemented. Litigation from the tobacco industry could slow down that timeline or halt the process entirely.

In the same announcement, Commissioner Gottlieb also stated that the FDA plans to crack down on electronic cigarettes. Specifically, online vendors will be required to age verify and in-person sale of flavored e-cigarettes will be limited to adult-only locations. Like the proposed menthol rule, these changes will require a public comment period.



Copenhagen giveaway: Engraved wooden coasters



Copenhagen Smokeless Tobacco will celebrate their 200th anniversary in 2022 and is heavily promoting this anniversary—four years early. As part of their promotion, they sent out free wooden coasters to their email subscribers. The coasters are engraved with images of plants, presumably the tobacco plant in different stages of its life cycle.

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TOBACCO MARKETING UPDATE



Mobile coupons: A new way to get cheap tobacco products

By *MADLINE BREMEL*

Ten different tobacco companies including Marlboro, Skoal, Camel, Newport and Winston now offer mobile coupons that can be redeemed in most places their products are sold. Mobile coupons are marketed as a paperless alternative to direct mail coupons and are more efficient and convenient for the retailers and consumers. Mobile coupons also offer customers more frequent discounts. Where paper coupons are only available once per month, mobile coupons are available up to twice each week from most companies.

Some users can access coupons through mobile apps created by the tobacco companies with names like "Oasis" (Camel), but these apps are not available for iPhone users. In 2017, Apple updated their App Store Review Guidelines to state that Apps encouraging the consumption or facilitating the sale of "tobacco products, illegal drugs, or excessive amounts of alcohol are not permitted in the App Store". However, Apple users can still access mobile coupons through the internet browser on their phone. Many of the tobacco industry applications and websites utilize the location tracking features of cell phones to track whether a user is inside a designated store, meaning a coupon can only be redeemed if the consumer is within a certain distance of a tobacco retailer.



Mobile coupons are promoted as a cost-saving alternative to paper coupons.

Thanksgiving messaging from the tobacco industry



Email messaging from Longhorn Moist Snuff

By *MADLINE BREMEL*

For Thanksgiving, General Snus ran a series on their Facebook page promoting snus as a holiday-friendly family bonding tool. Each post featured a different holiday activity. One post included a debate about whether stopping for snus on the way to Thanksgiving dinner would be worthwhile if it required a detour in another direction. They invited followers to comment about how they would handle this situation. Another post featured a situation where a can of snus was used as bartering agent to trade a transit employee for a better train seat. The series concluded at the Thanksgiving dinner table with a can of snus being slipped under the table to an uncle itching to go out for a smoke break. The post signed off with a statement that this charitable action could immediately make you your uncle's favorite person at the table.

Several other tobacco companies used Thanksgiving messages in their marketing this month. Virginia Slims cigarettes invited their email subscribers to

"cozy up to fall" with a Sweet Potato Gnocchi recipe. Longhorn Moist Snuff, Red Man Chewing Tobacco, and Timber Wolf Moist Snuff sent out Thanksgiving messages to their email subscribers, and Newport cigarettes sent out a "Beer Gravy" Thanksgiving recipe.



Thanksgiving email imagery from Newport cigarettes