What’s New in Tobacco Marketing?

Lucy Goods Launches “Health Campaign” to “Kick” the Smoking Habit

In two connected marketing promotions from October 2021, Lucy Goods claims that nicotine is not linked to cancer. First, this Lucy blog post linked to an email as “Nicotine FAQs” implies that it’s just cancer-causing smoking that’s the problem. From the blog post, “There have been no significant scientific studies in humans to determine any carcinogenic effects from nicotine or nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products on their own.”

Second, Lucy promoted quitting commercial tobacco to prevent cancer, specifically breast cancer. “It is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which is a great time to remind you that tobacco use is the most preventable cause of all types of cancers.”

These promotions advertise Lucy’s products as “clean nicotine” alternatives compared to other commercial tobacco products and fail to mention that only one Lucy product has FDA approval as an NRT. Lucy uses the words “clean nicotine” to lull consumers into a false sense of security about nicotine harms. We know that nicotine is a health danger for pregnant people and developing babies and recent studies suggest nicotine has several potential cancer-causing effects.

Used as directed, FDA-approved NRTs are helpful tobacco quit tools. However, Lucy continues to hide behind its one NRT product and mislead consumers with its lack of transparency about nicotine harms.

Tobacco Industry Performatve
Environmental Justice Strikes Again

Project Watch has identified several examples of the tobacco industry’s performative social and environmental justice promotions in the past few issues. Marlboro’s latest exhibition is donating to wildfire relief. Marlboro’s concern should extend instead to tobacco’s global footprint and the environmental toll it takes on our planet for the tobacco industry to manufacture six trillion cigarettes per year.

(Left) Marlboro matched rewards point donations to the American Red Cross through 11/30/21 to help support communities affected by Hurricane Ida and western wildfires. (Email received Oct. 26, 2021)
Grassroots Advocacy Urged to Oppose Tobacco Tax in Build Back Better Bill

Leading up to the federal Build Back Better Bill Act vote, brands like Vuse, On!, KOOL, Camel and Grizzly urged their email subscribers to reach out to legislators to oppose any nicotine taxes that were originally included. All advocacy emails are linked to websites like Own It, Voice It (website owned and operated by Reynolds American Inc.) or Voters For Tobacco Freedom (website owned and operated by ITG brands) where individuals fill out an auto form and click to send it to legislators.

Marlboro Ranch No More

Every year since 1999, 350 Marlboro customers have won an all-expense-paid trip to visit Marlboro Ranch, or what’s been called Disneyland for smokers. Marlboro users could win trips to the ranch through contest promotions. This working ranch included a plethora of hospitality facilities including a hotel and spa, saloon and event centers and activities like horseback riding, snowmobiling, and fly fishing. In July, Philip Morris USA sold the Montana-located vacation ranch to a private equity firm.