



Tobacco Marketing Works

Media Campaign Resources

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What is the purpose of this media campaign?

The purpose of this media campaign is to educate New Yorkers about the dangers of tobacco industry marketing in retail stores, and the effect that this marketing has on New York's youth.

2. Why are you talking about tobacco marketing in stores, rather than other "more important" issues?

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable deaths in the nation, and it costs New York taxpayers more than \$8 billion annually in healthcare costs.³ Despite previous successes such as New York's Clean Indoor Air Act, and the continued decline in youth smoking rates, it is clear that more needs to be done to prevent youth from picking up their first cigarettes. Retail stores are the main channel of communication for the tobacco industry, and they spend more money to market their products than the junk food, soda and alcohol industries combined. 75% of teens shop in convenience stores at least once per week⁸, and research shows that exposure to tobacco marketing is a primary cause of youth smoking.

3. Why should I care about tobacco marketing in stores?

Most adult smokers become addicted before they graduate from high school: 90% of them start before the age of 18.¹ Research shows that exposure to tobacco marketing in stores is a primary cause of youth smoking.

4. What is tobacco marketing?

Tobacco marketing refers to the posters and signs inside and outside stores, as well as the colorful, well-lit displays of tobacco products behind the counter in most convenience stores, gas stations, pharmacies and grocery stores. Exposure to both ads and displays has been shown to make youth more likely to start smoking. The more tobacco marketing kids see, the more likely they are to smoke.

5. In these difficult times, will this campaign hurt small business owners?

This campaign is not an attack on small business owners. We do not seek to prevent retailers from selling tobacco products – we are working to minimize the effect of marketing on impressionable children and teens. Smoking costs New York State taxpayers in excess of \$8 billion per year in healthcare costs. Measures that reduce smoking rates can only improve the economy by decreasing healthcare costs for businesses, as well as improving productivity and the economy.

6. How much control does the tobacco industry really have inside privately owned stores?

- a. The tobacco companies pay retailers – including giving them free shelving, racks and cabinets – to put tobacco products in the most visible locations in stores. Many retailers sign contracts with tobacco companies, whose sales reps measure, inch-by-inch, the shelving area that retailers are required to use for displaying and marketing tobacco products. Industry representatives work in our community each day to make sure that stores adhere strictly to the contract at all times. As a result, many New York retailers have become ensnared in a contractual web where they are stuck doing the tobacco industry’s dirty work.

7. Isn’t the FDA doing something about this already?

- a. While the FSPTCA does allow the FDA to regulate tobacco products, at this time there are no enforceable federal regulations on tobacco marketing inside stores. In fact, the FSPTCA grants specifically states and localities the authority to regulate the time, place and manner of tobacco advertising and promotions.

8. Hasn’t the anti-tobacco campaign succeeded since smoking is banned indoors in New York State?

- a. While clean indoor air has made New York a much healthier place to live, work and play, each day more teens light their first cigarette in a lifetime of addiction. According to the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, each year, 24,100 new youth begin smoking in New York State alone. Smoking rates among high school seniors remain at approximately 19%.²

9. Who is Tobacco Free NYS.org?

- a. Tobacco Free NYS.org is a website created by the Community Partnerships for a Tobacco Free New York State who are funded by the NY Tobacco Control Program. Community Partnerships educate community leaders and the public about the dangers and social costs of tobacco use, engage local stakeholders to adopt policies that restrict the tobacco industry’s presence, seek to de-normalize tobacco use and eliminate secondhand smoke.

¹ <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/reports/settlements/toll.php?StateID=NY> Accessed 2/7/11

² New York State Youth Tobacco Survey (2010)