

# TOBACCO ADVERTISING, SPONSORSHIP AND PROMOTION

## Point of Sale Marketing

Tobacco marketing at the point of sale (POS) includes advertising, promotion (price discounts and product giveaways), and product display at any location where tobacco products are sold. POS marketing is sometimes either explicitly exempted or not included in laws banning tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.<sup>1</sup> POS marketing weakens the effectiveness of tobacco control laws, and exposes the population to tobacco industry marketing tactics that are intended to increase the sale and consumption of tobacco products. Youth are particularly vulnerable to POS. POS marketing makes it harder for smokers to quit.

### POS Advertising Exposes Youth To Pro-Tobacco Messages And Creates Positive Attitudes Toward Tobacco Products And Brands

- Tobacco products and advertisements are often placed near candy and children's items and at children's eye level, encouraging children to see them as harmless everyday items.<sup>1-3</sup>
- Studies in Brazil and California found that stores visited frequently by adolescents have more tobacco advertising than stores less popular with adolescents.<sup>4, 5</sup>
- Higher rates of smoking among youth have been found in schools located in neighborhoods with a higher density of tobacco outlets and retail cigarette advertising.<sup>6</sup>
- Youth exposed to stores with high levels of tobacco advertising were more likely to believe that tobacco is easier to buy and to overestimate the percentage of peers and adults that smoke than youth who were exposed to stores with no tobacco advertising.<sup>7-9</sup>
- A study conducted in the United States estimated that banning POS advertising and requiring cigarette packs to be kept out of sight could reduce adolescents' exposure to cigarette brand by as much as 83%.<sup>4</sup>

### POS Advertising, Promotions, And Product Displays Increase Youth Experimentation And Initiation

- Studies have consistently found significant associations between exposure to POS tobacco advertising, promotions and product displays with smoking initiation, susceptibility to smoking, or intentions to smoke among youth.<sup>8, 10-13</sup>
- Adolescents who frequently (i.e., more than twice a week) visit stores where cigarettes are widely advertised are more likely to start smoking than adolescents who visit such stores less frequently.<sup>14, 15</sup>
- A study in Norway found that younger respondents were more likely than older people to say that tobacco product displays tempted them to buy cigarettes.<sup>11</sup>
- The availability of POS promotions increases the likelihood that youth will move from experimentation to regular tobacco use.<sup>12</sup>

### POS Advertising And Product Displays Encourage Impulse Buying And Makes It Harder For Users To Quit

- An Australian study found that nearly 40% of individuals trying to quit smoking experience urges to smoke when they see cigarette advertisements. More than 60% impulsively buy cigarettes as a result, and 20% avoid stores where they normally buy cigarettes to avoid the temptation.<sup>16</sup>

A point of sale refers to any location where tobacco products are advertised, displayed, and purchased. POS includes not only the final point of purchase (i.e., the register) but also advertising at retail locations (indoor and outdoor), product display, and price.



Marlboro cash register



Colorful POS cigar display next to candy



Cigarette promotion and display at POS

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- A four-country study found lower levels of impulse buying in Canada and Australia, where tobacco displays are banned, than in the US and UK, where tobacco displays were not banned at the time of the study.<sup>17</sup>
- Interviews with former smokers in New Zealand found that exposure to tobacco displays caused them “physical and emotional cravings” that made quitting smoking more difficult.<sup>18</sup>
- A post-purchase study in Vermont found that one in ten cigarette purchases was unplanned, and young people and those attempting to quit were more likely to make unplanned purchases. A third of smokers agreed that POS advertising makes quitting more difficult.<sup>19</sup>

### The Tobacco Package And Tobacco Products Displays Are Marketing Tools

Tobacco companies rely on the tobacco pack design as a critical form of marketing, exploiting all elements of packaging to promote their products.<sup>20</sup>

- Elaborately designed tobacco product displays attract attention to packs and other tobacco products through the materials used to construct the display, lighting, shape, and color arrangement. Large displays typically located behind the cash registers are referred to as “power walls” because of their prominence.<sup>21</sup>
- Tobacco product displays act as a potent marketing tool, which normalize smoking and allow the tobacco industry to communicate with non-smokers, ex-smokers and established smokers.<sup>22</sup>
- The tobacco industry uses contracts and monetary incentives with retailers to ensure prime placement of their products and advertisements.<sup>23, 24</sup>
- Exposure to tobacco displays is associated with a higher probability of smoking and a higher probability of smoking more cigarettes.<sup>25, 8</sup>



Star Mild cigarette kiosk



Outdoor Marlboro POS display



Camel POS price discount



POS tobacco ad, display, and price discounts

### KEY MESSAGES

- Point of sale marketing is a powerful means of tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship that is especially effective with youth and smokers trying to quit.
- Comprehensive bans of tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship are essential to reduce tobacco use.
- Comprehensive bans of tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship should include bans on POS advertising, promotion, and product display.

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