Tobacco Industry Quotes On The Industry's Efforts To Improve Their Image

"The companies are committed to changing the way we do business – a 'new day' commitment that will dramatically affect the way tobacco products are manufactured, marketed and sold in the United States."

"We recommend that company spokespeople assume greater visibility in order to demonstrate the 'new day' approach of the tobacco companies."

Bozell Sawyer Miller Group [public relations firm] memo, December 22, 1997, suggesting messages that the tobacco industry should deliver to garner support for the June 20, 1997, proposed settlement.

"We recommend launching a joint industry site on the worldwide web in order to establish a constant source of information. Documents to be posted would include ad copy, industry statements, fact sheets, etc. . . . The web page would also be useful in capturing valuable demographic information to the extent possible."


"[If Philip Morris took] a more progressive position on tobacco, it would enable the company to move onto a higher moral playing field, to neutralize the tobacco issue and to focus attention on other, more appealing products."

Philip Morris internal memo, "Philip Morris Corporate Affairs Strategic Plan for 1993."

"[Speeches announcing changes would prove that the company had made] a clean break with the past and is determined to be the best of corporate citizens in protecting nonsmokers and the young."

Philip Morris internal memo, "Philip Morris Corporate Affairs Strategic Plan for 1993."

"[Philip Morris should] unilaterally work on legislation to modify, restrict or reform advertising of cigarettes to young people."

Philip Morris internal memo, "Philip Morris Corporate Affairs Strategic Plan for 1993."

"I have real problems with those documents. I don't like them. I don't like them as chief executive of this company, and I don't like them as a father. I think they represent a way of thinking about a business that I simply don't agree with. They look to the habits of adolescents in determining how to make marketing and manufacturing plans. That's unacceptable today, and there is no one at R.J.R. Nabisco, based on my knowledge of these people. . . that would dare even think to do anything like that. It's just completely improper."


"Although no one can change the past, I have tried to draw lessons from it and that is why I believe our priorities and focus should be on the future."

"We ask you to judge us not by looking at the past, but rather by looking at what we have committed to do in the future."

Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corporation Chairman and CEO, Nicholas Brookes, before the House Committee on Commerce, January 29, 1998.

"The controversy that has surrounded tobacco products over the preceding decades has provided no positive outcome for anyone. It is time to put the controversy behind us."


"I'm ashamed at that. I don't like to see something from the company talking about 16-year-olds. We do not market cigarettes to underage people."


"Frankly, as I said, I am really focused on the future, not the past."


"I can give you a solemn undertaking, so long as I'm watching this company, these things won't happen."

Philip Morris CEO Geoffrey Bible, testifying in Minnesota's Medicaid suit, March 2, 1998, when asked about former Philip Morris officials lying to the public.

"Well firstly I would say that if Philip Morris did do it. . . I would be horrified if they did do that."

Philip Morris CEO Geoffrey Bible, testifying in Minnesota's Medicaid suit, March 2, 1998, when asked about former Philip Morris officials lying to the public.

"If that were the case, I would reconsider my responsibilities."

Philip Morris CEO Geoffrey Bible, testifying in Minnesota's Medicaid suit, March 2, 1998, when asked what he would do if he became convinced that cigarettes kill people.

"Well, I am ashamed of this. I am very sorry about that."


"I can tell you categorically I have no idea of anything like that happening today."

Philip Morris CEO Geoffrey Bible, testifying in Minnesota's Medicaid suit, March 4, 1998, responding to internal memos that suggested Philip Morris in the 1970s had an elaborate system, including the apparent use of mail drops, to distance itself from its European lab.

"We should not be marketing cigarettes to young people. It is certainly anomalous to the Philip Morris I know."


"We did not look at the underage market even though I am holding a document in my hand that says we did."
James Morgan, former president and CEO of Philip Morris' domestic tobacco unit, in a deposition recorded September, 1997.

``I would be more than shocked if I found out that the . . . product testing panel had smokers below the age of 18. I would be totally shocked by that.''

James Morgan, former president and CEO of Philip Morris' domestic tobacco unit, testifying in Minnesota's Medicaid suit, March 2, 1998, responding to a confidential 1969 memo, ``Marlboro Market Penetration by Age and Sex.'' A graph in the memo lists data for 15-year-old smokers, suggesting they were part of the test panels.

"We shouldn't have done that. We did it. We're not perfect. We just shouldn't have done that."

James Morgan, former president and CEO of Philip Morris' domestic tobacco unit, testifying in Minnesota's Medicaid suit, March 2, 1998, responding to a half-dozen studies that show Philip Morris monitored youth smoking.

"I think it is wrong, frankly stupid and unnecessary."

Andrew J. Schindler, president and CEO of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., testifying in Minnesota's Medicaid suit, March 5, 1998, when confronted with internal documents from the 1970s concerning Reynolds' share of the underage smoker market.

``[Marketing to minors] certainly doesn't happen today. We shouldn't be discussing 14-year-olds in any way, shape or form."


"We want very much for him to testify fully and truthfully."

Philip Morris lead counsel, Michael York, referring to former Philip Morris scientist Dr. Thomas Osdene invoking his Fifth Amendment right more than 100 times during testimony in Minnesota's Medicaid suit, February 17, 1998.

Compiled by: Smoking Control Advocacy Resource Center (SCARC)
"To ensure increased and longer-term growth for Camel filter, the brand must increase its share penetration among the 14-24 age group, which have a new set of more liberal values and which represent tomorrow's cigarette business."


"They represent tomorrow's cigarette business. As this 14-24 age group matures, they will account for a key share of the total cigarette volume for at least the next 25 years."


"This suggests slow market share erosion for us in the years to come unless the situation is corrected…. Our strategy becomes clear for our established brands: 1. Direct advertising appeal to the younger smokers."


"If younger adults turn away from smoking, the industry must decline, just as a population which does not give birth will eventually dwindle."


"Younger adult smokers have been the critical factor in the growth and decline of every major brand and company over the last 50 years. They will continue to be just as important to brands/companies in the future for two simple reasons: The renewal of the market stems almost entirely from 18-year-old smokers. No more than 5 percent of smokers start after age 24."


"Brands/companies which fail to attract their fair share of younger adult smokers face an uphill battle."


"Younger adult smokers are the only source of replacement smokers."

"[The report on Teenage Smokers (14-17)] indicates that RJR continues to gradually decline and between the spring and fall 1979 periods, RJR's total share declined from 21.3 [percent] to 19.9. [percent]. Hopefully, our various planned activities that will be implemented this fall will aid in some way in reducing or correcting these trends."


"It's a well known fact that teenagers like sweet products. Honey might be considered."

Brown & Williamson memo from consultants recommending that the company consider Coca-Cola or other sweet-flavored cigarettes, 1972.

"Kool has shown little or no growth in share of users in the 26 [plus] age group. . . . Growth is from 16-25-year-olds. At the present rate, a smoker in the 16-25 year age group will soon be three times as important to Kool as a prospect in any other broad age category."


"Kool's stake in the 16- to 25-year-old population segment is such that the value of this audience should be accurately weighted and reflected in current media programs. As a result, all magazines will be reviewed to see how efficiently they reach this group and other groups as well"

Brown & Williamson memo, by brand manager R. L. Johnson, to executive V.P. Pittman, 1973, Minnesota Trial Exhibit #13820.

"We are not sure that anything can be done to halt a major exodus if one gets going among the young. This group follows the crowd, and we don't pretend to know what gets them going for one thing or another. . . . Certainly Philip Morris should continue efforts for Marlboro in the youth market, but perhaps as strongly as possible aimed at the white market rather than attempting to encompass blacks as well."


"We will no longer be able to rely on a rapidly increasing pool of teenagers from which to replace smokers through lost normal attrition. . . . Because of our high share of the market among the youngest smokers Philip Morris will suffer more than the other companies from the decline in the number of teenage smokers."

Philip Morris report sent from researcher Myron E. Johnston to Robert B. Seligman, then Vice President of Research and Development, 1981.

"Today's teen-ager is tomorrow's potential regular customer. . . . The smoking patterns of
teenagers are particularly important to Philip Morris. . . the share index is highest in the youngest group for all Marlboro and Virginia Slims packings."

Philip Morris report sent from researcher Myron E. Johnston to Robert B. Seligman, then Vice President of Research and Development, 1981.

"Marlboro's phenomenal growth rate in the past has been attributable in large part to our high market penetration among young smokers. . . 15 to 19 years old. . . my own data, which includes younger teenagers, shows even higher Marlboro market penetration among 15-17-year-olds."

Philip Morris report sent from researcher Myron E. Johnston to Robert B. Seligman, then Vice President of Research and Development, 1975.

"You may recall from the article I sent you that Jeffrey Harris of MIT calculated. . . the 1982-1983 round of price increases caused two million adults to quit smoking and prevented 600,000 teenagers from starting to smoke. Those teenagers are now 18-21 years old, and since about 70 percent of 18-20 year-olds and 35 percent of older smokers smoke a PM brand, this means that 700,000 of those adult quitters had been PM smokers and 420,000 of the non-starters would have been PM smokers. Thus, if Harris is right, we were hit disproportionately hard. We don't need this to happen again."

Philip Morris internal document, "Handling an excise tax increase," 1987, Minnesota Trial Exhibit #11591 [emphasis in original].

"The teenage years are also important because those are the years during which most smokers begin to smoke, the years in which initial brand selections are made, and the period in the life cycle in which conformity to peer group norms is greatest."


"Winston, of course, faces one unique challenge. . . . It's what we've been calling the 'doomsday scenario': an acute deficiency of young adult smokers, apparently implying Marlboro's final domination and our utter demise within a generation."


"Smoking a cigarette for the beginner is a symbolic act. . . 'I am no longer my mother's child, I'm tough, I am an adventurer, I'm not square.' . . . As the force from the psychological symbolism subsides, the pharmacological effect takes over to sustain the habit. . . ."

1969 draft report to the Philip Morris Board of Directors.

"The base of our business is the high-school student."

"Overall, Camel advertising will be directed toward using peer acceptance/influence to provide the motivation for target smokers to select Camel."


"[Camel advertising will create] the perception that Camel smokers are non-conformist, self-confident and project a cool attitude, which is admired by their peers. . . Aspiration to be perceived as a cool member of the in-group is one of the strongest influences affecting the behavior of younger adult smokers."


"I have just received data on the graduating class of 1982 and the results are much more encouraging, and corroborate the Roper data [a survey that tracked smoking trends]. . . These data show that smoking prevalence among these 18-year-old high school seniors has increased from 1981 to 1982."

Philip Morris memo, February 18, 1983.

"[Project LF is a] wider-circumference nonmenthol cigarette targeted at young adult male smokers (primarily 13-24-year-old male Marlboro smokers)."

R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. memo describing the Camel Wides brand, under the code name Project LF, 1987.

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** Tobacco Industry Quotes On Nicotine And Addiction **

From Recently Released Documents

"The most direct solution to the problem of increasing nicotine delivery in the new product would be to add nicotine alkaloid directly to the tobaccos used in the new blend. The direct approach involved determining at which point in the manufacturing process the nicotine could be added, and secondly, determining where the necessary quantity of nicotine to support a major brand could be obtained. The direct approach involves some serious problems, mainly centering around the intensely poisonous nature of nicotine alkaloid..."


"Very few consumers are aware of the effects of nicotine, i.e., its addictive nature and that nicotine is a poison."
"Tobacco scientists know that physiological satisfaction is almost totally related to nicotine intake."


"Goal -- Determine the minimum level of nicotine that will allow continued smoking. We hypothesize satisfaction cannot be compensated for by psychological satisfaction. At this point smokers will quit, or return to higher T&N brands."

Lorillard memo from Richard E. Smith to Alexander Spears, concerning the RT Information Task Force, February 13, 1980, Minnesota Trial Exhibit #10170.

"Very few consumers are aware of the effects of nicotine, i.e., its addictive nature and that nicotine is a poison."


"Nicotine is the addicting agent in cigarettes."


"Let us provide the exquisiteness, and hope that they, our consumers, continue to remain unsatisfied. All we would want then is a larger bag to carry the money to the bank."

Colin Greig, British American Tobacco, alluding to a quote in Oscar Wilde's 1891 novel The Picture of Dorian Gray, "A cigarette is the perfect type of a perfect pleasure. It is exquisite and it leaves one unsatisfied. What more can one want."

"I believe the thing we sell most is nicotine."

Philip Morris memo, 1980.

"I believe that for the typical smoker nicotine satisfaction is the dominant desire, as opposed to flavor and other satisfactions."


"I don't know of any smoker who at some point hasn't wished he didn't smoke. If we could offer
an acceptable alternative for providing nicotine, I am 100 percent sure we would have a gigantic brand."


"The first is concerned with the ethical question: 'Is it morally permissible to develop a safe method for administering a habit-forming drug when, in so doing, the number of addicts will increase?'"

        Liggett Group memo about the problems in developing a less hazardous cigarette, 1978.

"The cigarette should not be construed as a product but a package. The product is nicotine. Think of a puff of smoke as the vehicle for nicotine."

        William L. Dunn Jr., Philip Morris researcher, after taking part in a 1972 Caribbean meeting held by the Council for Tobacco Research.

"We are basically in the nicotine business. . . . Effective control of nicotine in our products should equate to a significant product performance and cost advantage."


"We are searching explicitly for a socially acceptable addictive product. The essential constituent is most likely to be nicotine or a direct substitute for it."


"Although more people talk about 'taste,' it is likely that greater numbers smoke for the narcotic value that comes from the nicotine."

        Philip Morris memo, 1972.

"Irrespective of the ethics involved, we should develop alternative designs (that do not invite obvious criticism) which will allow the smoker to obtain significant enhanced deliveries [of nicotine] should he so wish."


"It may well be to remind you, however, that we have a research program in progress to obtain, by genetic means, any level of nicotine."

"The secret of Marlboro is ammonia."


"R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. introduced ammoniated sheet (processed tobacco) material in the Camel filter product in 1974. Better market performance was indicated in subsequent years."

Undated R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. report.

"[A]ny desired additional nicotine ‘kick’ could be easily obtained through pH regulation."

1973 R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. memo titled, "Cigarette concept to assure RJR a larger segment of the youth market."

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Quotes On The Health Risks Of Smoking From Recently Released Documents

"If we are to survive as a viable commercial enterprise, we must act now to develop responses to smoking and health allegations from both the private and the government sectors. The anti-smoking forces are out to bury us."

Memo by Philip Morris researcher Thomas Osdene, 1982.

"Let's face facts: Cigarette smoke is biologically active. Nicotine is a potent pharmacological agent. Every toxicologist, physiologist, medical doctor and most chemists know that. It's not a secret."

Memo by Philip Morris researcher Thomas Osdene, 1982.

"An admission by the industry that excessive cigarette smoking is bad for you is tantamount to an admission of guilt with regard to the lung cancer problem. This could open the door to legal suits to which the industry would have no defense."


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