

Tobacco Marketing and Young People

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Smoking prevalence among young people (11-15 year olds) declined from 13% in 1996 to 10% in 2001 (Boreham & Shaw 2001). However, this decline appears to have plateaued. Smoking prevalence increases rapidly with age, with the majority starting during their teenage years (Walker et al 2001). Research conducted into young teenagers and smoking in 1998 indicated that less than 1% of 11 year olds were regular smokers compared with over a fifth (21%) of 15 year olds (Higgins 1998).

For many years concerns have been raised within the tobacco control community regarding the impact that tobacco marketing communications have on young peoples' smoking behaviour (ASH 1998, INFACT 2003). Numerous voluntary agreements have been in place to regulate the placement of ads, their creative content and the use of health warnings on promotional material. Tobacco advertisers are not permitted to target those under 16. The industry have consistently argued that they do not aim to attract underage recruits and are only interested in promoting brand switching among adult smokers.

In 1999 The House of Commons Health Select Committee obtained access to the internal documents of five main advertising agencies of the UK tobacco industry. The five agencies were: CDP, M&C Saatchi, Mustoe Merriman Herring and Levy, TBWA GCT Simon Palmer Limited and Lowe Howard-Spink. A range of documents were obtained including: contact reports between client and agency, client briefs, creative briefs, media briefs, media schedules, advertising budgets and market research reports (their own and others by contracted agencies). These documents were scanned during the summer of 2002 at the Centre for Tobacco Control Research to develop a searchable electronic archive (http://www.tobaccopapers.com). This site was searched using the keyword 'young people' yielding 155 results. All of these documents were briefly reviewed online to determine their significance and those relevant were printed out for detailed analysis.

The documents demonstrate that:

- 1. The industry is acutely aware of serving young smokers' emotional needs.
- 2. Brands are associated with the attributes of 'youth' and the industry design marketing strategies that are deliberately 'young'.
- 3. The industry actively develops strategies to recruit young smokers and the success of some brands is based on recruiting people young.
- 4. The industry actively search for ways to bend and circumvent the voluntary regulations set in place to protect young people.
- 5. Youth style magazines were an important component of youth marketing strategies.
- 6. The industry employs sophisticated egmentation techniques and uses derogatory terms, such as slobs, to describe certain clusters.

2.0 ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL DOCUMENTS

2.1 The Industry is Acutely Aware of Serving Young Smokers' Emotional Needs

The internal documents distinguish different stages in young peoples' emotional development. Uptake of smoking is recognised to be a rebellious activity although also a risky one. Consequently new entrants tend to smoke well known and regionally popular brands. Peer group conformity is key for this group:

'Introduction

In this area B&H is already the dominant brand. This means before even looking at the profiles, we start from the position of being the biggest brand for all age groups and both sexes. We mirror our closest premium competitor — Embassy — in terms of sex but are different in terms of age, Embassy being skewed very young. In the case of the south this is the way to think about it — we are relatively normal in our demographic profile, Embassy are abnormally young.

Implications:

The only hypothesis I have on this, concerns the relative levels of smoking, north and south. More people, as a percentage of the population, smoke in the north. For people entering the market, it is a fairly normal market to be entering – nothing special – and you are likelier to go into the market and adopt the brands that are already prominent. Hence the big brands get more than its fair share of recruitment because people see no problem in adopting it. Where smoking isn't so prevalent, as in the south, there's more of a choice to make because people probably aren't aware which brand is the band leader. Brand size therefore doesn't automatically give you a massive share of recruits.'

(CDP Consumer Lifestyle Analysis, 1995a)

'Background

Gallaher are exploring the opportunity for the launch of a new brand, targeted at younger smokers, communicating an outgoing personality and offering a mellow flavoured product.

Specifically, the research sought to [among other things]: explore the opportunity for a mellow blend new brand from B&H, targeted at younger, image/fashion conscious smokers.

Main findings

1. The people

- Many smoking as an 'accoutrement to style' statement, the image style statement of their preferred brand was important to them.

Respondent characteristics

Conservatives

Surprisingly strongly conservative in values (given age)

Cigarettes smoked must add to credibility, not challenge it

Little desire to be 'anarchic'

Strong desire to 'conform'

Acceptance is all!.'

(Colquhoun Associates Debrief Presentation, 1996)

Once young smokers have entered the market and become regular smokers, their emotional needs change and there is a desire for brands that are different and allow them to express their independence and individuality. The document below explicitly highlights the role that various brands play in moving young smokers through the process from adoption, to becoming an established smoker and on to adult smoker:

Younger Smokers Marlboro Lights Adults Silk Cut Adoption Rites of passage Silk Cut as a convention Distinctive Big Taken from parents Different Established Choosing what In the know Sensible everyone smokes Trendy Obvious choice An easy smoke Youthful Grown up (Mike Imms Research Report, 1996)

Young, established smokers do not want to smoke the same brand as new entrants into the market or the ones their parents smoke; they want brands that are specifically for them and reflect their needs and lifestyles:

'Why are we advertising?

- To announce the launch of new B&H Yellow.
- To create noise and gain attention amongst young adult smokers.
- To create a feeling of this brand being for them and not for others.

Who are we talking to?

18-24 year old premium smokers.

They are rebellious in attitude and want to express this in their choice of fashion, music and brands. They want to be different from their parents.

They have no sense of their mortality and hence live life to the edge.

They're bored stiff with the cigarette market as the same brands are around, in the same pack sizes, with heavy Royal references or named after posh London squares.

They're looking for something new that they can call their own.

What should they think after seeing the advertising?

That's well different.

It's an ad for a new brand of cigarettes for B&H

It's for people like me.

Proposition

- 1. New B&H Yellow.
- 2. Two fingers up.

Substantiation

- 1. They are.
- 2. The brand will only be marketed and advertised to younger adult smokers. As such if we can own their attitude, we will be in a strong position.'

(M&C Saatchi Creative Brief, 1997a)

The industry clearly have a firm understanding of the changing needs of young people and develop brands and strategies that meet the different stages in youth smoking. This group are extremely image conscious and pay particular attention to marketing and advertising:

'Young Adults present marketers with a moving target which is educated, cynical and sophisticated in terms of advertising and marketing approaches, but also sensitive and vulnerable to imagery and communications which reflect or tune into their views of the macro world and/or their own micro level environment and values.'

(Laybourne Valentine Qual Ltd Research Document, 1998)

The documents make it clear that smoking among the young is as much about image as about product attributes and that the industry regards image consciousness as a vulnerability they can exploit. Smoking is recognised as a *'rite of passage'* and is regarded as a mark of maturity:

'To smoke Marlboro Lights represents having passed a rite of passage ie. it is not something done by immature smokers. Neither is it smoked by older people, unlike Silk Cut which is seen as being fit for all. Silk Cut's universality of appeal is a problem for younger smokers for it means the brand lacks sufficient "street cred".'

(Gallaher Memorandum, 1996)

These documents highlight that young people smoke primarily for emotional reasons – smoking is an '*image style statement*' and has the potential to '*add to credibility*' and young people choose those brands that will provide recognition within their peer group.

2.2 Brands Associate with Attributes of 'Youth' and the Industry Design Marketing Strategies that are Deliberately 'Young'

The previous section has highlighted that young people smoke primarily for emotional reasons and certain brands are chosen to fulfil the changing emotional needs of young people as they become more accustomed to smoking. This section demonstrates that the industry deliberately associate brands with *young*' and *'youth'* attributes and develop marketing strategies and brand values that meet the needs of young consumers.

Within the internal documents there are constant referrals to 'young' and 'younger' people and many of the documents highlight that the tobacco industry is aware that certain brands are known in the market as 'young brands':

'B&H smokers Profile

- **B&H Special Filter is a male, upmarket, young brand**Attitude

- **B&H** smokers are young, sociable and relatively carefree.'

(M&C Saatchi Briefing Document, 1996a)

Marketing strategies are designed to deliberately appeal to a 'youth audience'. It is recognised that 'younger target groups' and 'older target audiences' responses to advertising differ and consequently separate communication strategies are needed to appeal to each group:

Watch promotion

Target Audience as indicated by research

Overall findings indicate that the six most popular watch designs appeal predominantly to youth audience, with a male bias and weighted heavily towards a C_2DE classification.

'Car advertising:

Given that the style of image advertising that will benefit the brand for the younger target group is so far removed from that which will appeal to the older target audience, we feel that the two requirements are mutually exclusive and a single communication would therefore not be appropriate.'

(M&C Saatchi Creative Brief, 1996b)

A particularly worrying document was a qualitative research report for Gallaher which presented findings of research into cigarettes with reduced 'sidestream' smoke. The document discusses the benefits that young people and school age smokers would obtain from this innovation:

'Background

- Environmental tobacco smoke/passive smoking a growing issue
 - more so in the future?
 - implication of 'sidestream' measurement.
 - Technical opportunity to REDUCE sidestream
 - cut by 1/3 to 1/2 without changing product
 - Overseas products already exist
 - 'Pianissimo' Japan relies on paper and double wrap
 - Hi-Q Germany + Sweden charcoal based product that doesn't burn at all.

Findings

A Bear Trap

- "it'd be great for youngsters"! Smoke behind the bike sheds, preventing parents from finding out you smoke.
- "Smooch' a new generation of acceptable cigarettes"

POTENTIAL for the alcohol furore!!!

(Mike Imms Research Study, 1997)

Furthermore, the documents demonstrate that there is a desire for advertising to employ characters that are 'young' in appearance:

'Embassy Spanish sun ad.

Client approved Embassy 'Aeroplane' ad.

Client expressed concern that the clothes were kept simple but colourful and the models should be young.'

(Lowe Howard-Spink Contact Report, 1999)

The documents also demonstrate that much consideration is given to developing strategies that concur with the lifestyles of young people:

The clear packaging, I believe, is of paramount importance in differentiating the product from other brands in the market, and this is reinforced by the "Only believe what you see" line. The brainstorm raised some interesting ideas as to how we could leverage the singularity of the packaging and which are worth exploring. What I would add is that there is a definite sub-culture among younger ryo smokers, and I believe their desire to display their exclusivity could be supported by provision of unusually designed "badges" such as (transparent?) Raw lighters and rolling machines. This will enable them to differentiate themselves from uncool, older GV smokers, who I suspect would not be particularly motivated to buy the product by either the advertising or the packing.

Sampling and point-of-sale are probably going to be the major promotional platforms in just over six months time, and it is essential to consider on what basis these should be targeted now.

The events and venues should not be chosen purely on the basis that they are attended by young people. I can't really see the 18-30's who patronise venues such as All Bar One and Pitcher & Piano being Raw smokers.

I'm thinking rather of Glastonbury, hardcore clubs, student bars and pubs, and pubs like the Intrepid Fox (if you recall our pub-ad tour). Have you considered small (rather suspicious) sample packs for rock festivals?'

(CDP Correspondence, 1999a)

'What do we want this work to achieve?

We want more 18-34 year old blokes smoking B&H than ever before. We want to see these dudes ripping up packets of Marlboro and Camel and treating them with the disdain that second rate, American filth deserves. For Christ's sake what the hell are people doing smoking brands that are made to be smoked by 'cowhands' and not by the youth of the trendiest, coolest, most happening country in the world. In many ways this brief is really a charity brief. Trying to help people recognise that errors of their ways, thinking they are being cool smoking what Roy bloody Rodgers smoked and opening their eyes to the unchallengeable truth that the coolest smoke in the world is a B&H.

We want to see Great British B&H in the Ben Sherman shirt pockets of Britpopped, dance crazed, Tequila drinking, Nike kicking, Fast Show watching, Loaded reading, Babe pulling, young gentlemen.

So what we need is this coolest, most exciting, white knuckle ride of a campaign ever.'

(CDP Correspondence, 1999a)

It is clear from the evidence that the industry target young people and deliberately associate brands with youth values and characteristics through, for example, the type of promotions run and the type of characters employed.

2.3 The Industry Actively Develop Strategies to Recruit Young Smokers and the Success of Brands is Based on Recruiting People Young

The very survival of brands, such as Hamlet, centres on recruiting people when they are young. The following Gallaher documents demonstrate their concern with 'penetrating this younger social environment' and their desire to target 'new recruits':

Recruitment of younger smokers has traditionally provided the source of the older generations (25-54) that make up the core of the brand profile.

The majority of all cigar sales come from a core of heavy smokers. However, the majority of purchases are spontaneous one-offs in bars and pubs. **The concern is Hamlet is not penetrating this younger social environment**.'

(CDP Agenda/Miscellaneous, 1995b)

'Background

Hamlet has based a lot of its success on being the brand that young cigar smokers first try:

	LARGE WHIFF	CLASSIC	HAMLET	
16-24	10%	6%	13%	} INDEX 129
<i>25-34</i>	18%	17%	26%	}
35-44	19%	25%	26%	
45-54	23%	19%	18%	
55-64	14%	17%	10%	
65+	16%	16%	7%	
		Source: Omnimas		

(CDP Presentation, 1995c)

'Much of Hamlet's success is based on getting people young.

Recent results show slow but discernible decline amongst younger audiences. Concurrently, young people are showing falling interest in cigars.' A continuing waning of interest here spells severe problems for Hamlet's future..

We need to use as many media vehicles as possible to target new entrants/new recruits.'

(CDP Presentation, 1995c)

Similarly, a Benson & Hedges planning document outlines how critical recruiting young smokers is to the future success of the brand:

'Publication Selection and Insertion Levels

- Special Filter's future success is contingent upon continuing recruitment of younger smokers. A substantial proportion of the media budget must be allocated to this purpose, and particular creative executions have been developed to appeal to younger smokers.'

(CDP Presentation, 1995d)

Particularly worrying are documents that highlight the importance the industry attach to the under 16s. The following Benson & Hedges document, which outlines poster coverage and frequency in 1996, clearly demonstrates that they are concerned with people as young as 15.

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'Special Filter
Posters – coverage and frequency

BURST YEAR
All adults 58% @ 12 87% @ 41
All men 64% @ 17 90% @ 52
Men 15-44 69% @ 17 92% @ 64

(CDP Presentation, 1995d)
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There is also evidence of market research being conducted with people as young as 15 years. The extract below shows a reanalysis of 'TGI' data (a standard industry resource that is bought on a subscriptions basis by many advertising agencies) to provide a detailed picture of the values and aspirations of Silk Cut smokers. The original sample included 15 year olds:

Silk Cut - Age Splits

15-35 *year olds*

- Younger Silk Cut smokers are much more like their peer group than all smokers.
- Slightly higher on societies core values less Inner Directed.

35-65+ year olds

- Again all 35+ year olds who smoke are very Sustenance Driven with a strong Outer Directed pull. This pull will be partly caused by the rejection of core society values embodied by the Belongers.
- Silk Cut smokers over 35 are more Sustenance Driven, looking very like their peer group. Androgeny and excitement the only Inner Directed values perhaps link with older values associated with cigarette smoking.

(Synergy Consulting Presentation, 1995)

A presentation document for Gallaher clearly demonstrates that the tobacco industry are acutely aware of the reasons for smoking initiation among youth, among children as young as 8 years:

Smoking story - when started

• Starting ages vary

Early (8/9) With older siblings/friends, light parents'

In school (11-16) With friends

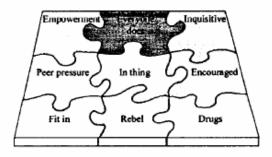
In college/Uni (16+) Pub/legal drinking related

Peer group

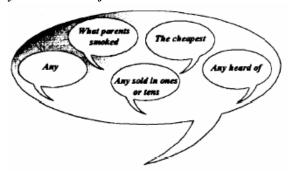
Later (20's) Adult choice

- Little difference between younger and older or social types
- Right of passage related

Smoking story - why started



Smoking story - what smoked first



Smoking story - smoking now

Early Adult Marlboro Lights (Marlboro), Embassy Red, Silk Cut,

Trendies (B&H)

Early Adult Silk Cut (more females), B&H (more males)

Mid Adult B&H (strong taste), Silk Cut (lower tar), Marlboro

Older Adult B&H (strong taste), Silk Cut (lower tar), cheapies (L&B)

Mr & Mrs Average

Older Adult Sovereigns, B&H, SuperKings, L&B (female), Berkeley,

Price cheapies

(Interbrand (UK) Ltd Presentation, 1997)

The extract below, from a Benson & Hedges creative brief, demonstrates that advertising is designed to, among other things, secure the 'experimental smoker':

'What do we expect advertising to achieve?

- Help stem the brand's decline
- To keep smokers with the brand for longer
- To cement the brand into the repertoire of the experimental smoker
- Ultimately to make Special Filter worth paying a bit extra for
- To keep the name Benson & Hedges pre-eminent in cigarettes
- Provide a platform for loyalty scheme.'

(CDP Creative Brief, 1995e)

The documents demonstrate that the industry have invested significant research resources in understanding young peoples' lifestyles, needs and values and what they require from brands to help fulfil these needs. The documents also highlight that the industry use research data relating to those under the legal age limit for smoking. At no point in any of the documents does the industry express concern that their marketing designed to appeal to 16 year olds may also appeal to younger age groups.

2.4 The Industry Actively Search for Ways to Bend and Circumvent the Voluntary Regulations Set in Place to Protect Young People

The documents highlight how the industry constantly pushes the restrictions outlined in the voluntary agreements that were in place during this period. They design advertising that is rejected by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) for appealing to 'rebellious youth' and that may 'appeal to kids'. Although many of these ideas are rejected by the ASA they discuss ways of 'fighting' such decisions:

<u> B&H</u>

ASA Feedback:

Subway:

Graffiti a concern as likely to appeal to rebellious youth.

Idea OK.

Thames Barge:

OK – guy must be ordinary bloke: not young and trendy.

Maze

Unacceptable. Too lush and green. May be able to get this through if we felt this is one of the strongest concepts.

Style Press:

In Bed.

Unacceptable due to sexual/romantic connotations.'

(CDP Memorandum, 1997a)

'Here follows comments from my meeting with ASA on 'Gold':

3. Star

Unacceptable

Due to appeal to kids. I discussed the possibility of it only appearing young man's style press, however, there was still concern about it being aspirational. In its most literal sense, it would be interpreted as someone 'reaching for the stars'. **I could have a go at fighting this one**, although they were quite emphatic – let me know.'

(CDP Memorandum, 1996)

Other instances emerge where the industry employs young characters in their advertising – as young as they can get away with:

'Thought should also be given to style press specific concepts as Gallaher are keen to develop a B&H conversation with this target. Therefore scenarios and people (as young as we can push them with the ASA) to appeal to 20-25 year olds should be considered. The requirement is 3 new style press concepts.'

(CDP Creative Brief, 1997b)

Similarly, marketing vehicles are used that knowingly may breach voluntary codes:

'Other premium advertising

Lucky Strike

Niche brand targeted at young urbanites, turning limited availability into a positive: exclusively likely to appeal to this group.

Use press and postcards in bars/restaurants

Pushing limits of voluntary code (eg. postcards).'

(CDP Presentation, 1999b)

These extracts demonstrate the industry is not concerned with working within the limits of voluntary agreements but instead constantly searching for ways to bend and circumvent them to market their products.

2.5 Youth Style Magazines were an Important Component of Marketing Strategies

When developing strategies targeted at younger people, youth style magazines feature heavily:

'Action

As far as Barry is concerned the next (June) burst will be:

Carousel National 48 sheet

Press

Beach London Upweight 48 Sheet

Security Light Press

Convent Garden Young peoples' style press.'

(CDP Memorandum, 1997a)

The industry recognised this as a growth area and saw them as a particularly important medium for "recruitment' advertising". These magazines reflect young peoples' lifestyles,

attitudes and values and consequently advertising in this medium is likely to be effective at communication with this group:

'Publication Selection Youth Titles

- Explosion in number of titles. Last 18 months has seen launch of general titles (Maxim), 'Lads' titles (Loaded) and particularly football titles (Four Four Two, Goal, Total Football).
- Not very cost effective, and individually add little to coverage, but 'recruitment' advertising is more likely to be effective in titles which mirror young smokers' attitudes and lifestyles and/or which they are prepared to pay £2+
- 'Gold' creative treatments may have a particular appeal for the young, and will sit comfortably within the editorial environments of those titles.'

(CDP Presentation, 1995d)

'Embassy Lights Advertising

Embassy Lights aimed at younger male smokers, bringing the down-to-earth character of Embassy Number 1 into the context of 'lad-culture'.

Heavy weight presence in 1998 in broader range of style press titles in 1998 than previously used. Editorial sponsorship throughout this period in tune with strategic thinking, with advertorials in young, brash titles: Loaded and Sky (initially not requiring ASA approval, however this type of activity now does).'

(CDP Presentation, 1999b)

At no point in the documents does the industry raise concerns that these publications may have been read by people under the age of 16.

2.6 The Industry Employ Sophisticated Segmentation Techniques and Use Derogatory Terms, Such as Slobs, to Describe their Target Audiences

Sophisticated segmentation techniques are used to separate the market into homogeneous groups, enabling communications and brands to be targeted more effectively.

The M&C Saatchi document below outlines various 'clusters' and describes certain groups as 'young', 'successful' and 'image conscious'. Marketing theory would imply that brands and marketing strategies are then designed that meet and fulfil these emotional needs.

<u> 1996 Target Clusters</u>

Urban Warriors Core leading edge trend setters

Young, style/label conscious,

452,000 18+ smokers (3.8%) hard edged

Young, successful, fashionable

Urban Venturers style leaders

Image conscious, tribal, social,

1,942,000 18+ smokers (16.5%) urban

Young to middle aged

Affluent Achievers successful well-off

Quality seeking, prefamily,

1,878,000 18+ smokers (15.9%) confident

Working age, conservative,

Middle England families

Middle Class values, secure,

2,104,000 18+ smokers (17.8%) comfortable

(M&C Saatchi Presentation, 1997b)

The extract below also highlights that some derogatory terms are used to describe certain clusters:

'In this report, we summarise the findings of a segmentation analysis (involving the use of cluster analysis) which was carried out to identify the different grouping of young smokers which exist in terms of attitudes to smoking and lifestyles/self-perceptions/motivations.

CLUSTER 1- 'SLOBS'

27% of cigarette smokers, **aged 18-24 years**, are represented by this cluster with 71% of them being C_2DEs .

CLUSTER 2- 'ASPIRING SOPHISTICATES'

Only one in five of young smokers are represented by this cluster, but they emerge as a very distinct group. 'Aspiring Sophisticates' are mainly 18-20 year old men, 15% being graduates or undergraduates.

CLUSTER 3 - 'CONSERVATIVES'

28% of cigarette smokers, aged 18-24 years, are represented by this cluster who we have entitled 'conservatives'.

(Market Trends Ltd, Segmentation Report, 1995)

3.0 CONCLUSIONS

The documents demonstrate that there were clear deficiencies in the voluntary agreements on tobacco marketing and the tobacco industry were clearly motivated and willing to search for ways to bend or circumvent them. Many of the marketing strategies developed – and especially branding – clearly contravene these regulations. However, these voluntary agreements have been surpassed by the UK Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act (2002). The Bill bans virtually all forms of tobacco promotion including advertising in the print media and billboards (by 14th February 2003) and direct mail and other promotions (by 14th May 2003). However, sponsorship, point-of-sale and brand sharing have not been covered as comprehensively and may still be open to the industry exploitation in the future.

The documents have highlighted that the lifestyles, motivations and aspirations of young people are the subject of detailed and continuous research by the tobacco industry. It is clear that young people smoke for emotional reasons and that the branding of tobacco products can meet these needs.

At no point in the documents does the tobacco industry express concern that the active marketing to 16 year olds will also attract children and the obvious dangers are never acknowledged while the documents clearly demonstrate that research is conducted with people as young as 15.

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