

### **Tobacco Industry Advertising in Periodicals**

Cigarette advertising in magazines and newspapers has been a staple of the tobacco industry's efforts to promote smoking as a social norm for decades. Tobacco company advertising in magazines continues to glamorize and normalize tobacco use today. Magazine and newspaper ads in the mid-1900's portrayed doctors and nurses smoking, conveying a healthful image of smoking. In 1964, the Surgeon General required that all cigarette packages and all tobacco print ads (including billboards, magazines and newspapers) carry a Surgeon General warning about the health consequences of smoking. In 1971, when the tobacco industry was prohibited from advertising on television, there was a dramatic increase in magazine and newspaper advertising.<sup>1</sup> No new restrictions on tobacco product advertising in magazines were implemented over the next 25 years.

The Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) of 1998 prohibits tobacco companies from directly or indirectly targeting youth through marketing, including through magazine and newspaper advertising, but contains no provisions limiting or restricting tobacco product advertising in magazines (beyond the admonishment not to target youth).

Numerous studies (listed in the Key Research Findings documents in the Resource section of this chapter) have demonstrated the relationship between tobacco marketing and youth smoking behavior. Tobacco company documents clearly describe the systematic and purposeful targeting – through advertising – of youth as replacement customers. Research conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health found that cigarette advertising in magazines with significant youth readership increased sharply 18 months after the MSA was signed.<sup>2</sup> By convention (based on the draft regulations proposed by the Food and Drug Administration in 1995), youth readership of a magazine is considered to be “significant” if 15 percent or more of the readers are aged 12 to 17 or if two million or more readers, regardless of percentage, are aged 12-17 years. These findings were widely disseminated by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

As a result of mounting public pressure and actions taken by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, tobacco companies began to revise their magazine advertising practices, including reducing advertising expenditures in magazines with “significant” youth readership. Philip Morris temporarily suspended cigarette advertising in some magazines with a high youth readership in 2000 and Brown and Williamson indicated it had a policy against advertising in magazines with a youth readership of greater than 15 percent. In June 2001 in California, RJ Reynolds was found guilty of violating the MSA by marketing to youth in magazines. Recently, there has been a notable decline in both the absolute number of cigarette advertisements and in tobacco company expenditures on cigarette advertising in magazines with a youth readership of 15 percent or more. It remains to be seen whether these trends in cigarette advertising in magazines will continue and how the tobacco companies will adjust their marketing efforts. History shows that tobacco companies don't stop targeting youth; they simply find new ways to do so.

Even with cigarette advertising confined to magazines with an adult readership of 85 percent or more, youth do read these magazines and these youth are exposed to the tobacco advertising they contain. Magazines such as *Sports Illustrated*, *People* and *Jet*

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Trade Commission Cigarette Report 1999, Washington, DC FTC 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Turner-Bowker D, Hamilton W. Cigarette advertising expenditures before and after the Master Settlement Agreement: preliminary findings. Boston, Massachusetts Department of Public Health. May 2000.

are very popular with youth and young adults. A study by the TIME Project at the University of California reports an increase in tobacco advertising in magazines with a youth readership hovering just below 15 percent. Not only are youth still being exposed to tobacco ads in magazines, youth have a higher recall of these ads than adults. Teens are twice as likely as adults to recall tobacco advertising.<sup>3</sup>

Even as cigarette advertising in magazines has declined, advertising of “spit tobacco” in men’s magazines has increased from \$150.4 million in 1997 to an all-time high of \$236.7 million in 2001, a 57 percent increase.<sup>4</sup> These trends demonstrate the limits of the MSA in reducing tobacco company advertising and the value of systematic monitoring of tobacco industry behavior.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, the number and variety of magazines have increased significantly in the past two decades, with more specialty magazines narrowly targeted to specific population groups. Tobacco companies are thus able to tailor their messages and carefully select their audiences, at the same time their activities become increasingly difficult to monitor. Just as importantly, tobacco company advertising influences (and constrains) the magazine’s ability to report on and accurately convey the health consequences of tobacco use. Magazines that carrying tobacco advertisements rarely address smoking as a health issue and rarely provide the much-needed accurate health information on tobacco use.

Newspapers are less likely to carry tobacco advertisements than magazines and many newspapers have specific policies prohibiting tobacco product advertising, including the *Seattle Times*, the *Boston Globe*, the *New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Desert News of Salt Lake City*, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* and the *Los Angeles Times*.

Tobacco advertisements in magazines and newspapers encourage youth initiation, normalize tobacco use, undermine tobacco cessation and prevention efforts, and promote addiction to deadly products. Publishers of magazines and newspapers should decline to carry ads for tobacco products. Institutions committed to the health and well being of their customers, patients, employees and students should not display magazines carrying tobacco advertisements in their libraries, waiting areas, and break rooms. Tobacco companies should be closely monitored and held accountable to the advertising restrictions expressed and implied in the MSA.

In 1993, Frank Blethem, publisher of the *Seattle Times*, said, “The evidence that smoking is the nation’s number one health problem is overwhelming. In good conscience, we can not longer provide a forum for promoting the sales of these products”.

In 1999, Richard Gilman, publisher of the *Boston Globe*, followed suit, stating that “We can no longer justify carrying advertisements that promote a product when the harm it causes is so evident and is now acknowledged even by one of the major tobacco companies. We can not in good conscience expose our readers, particularly our younger ones, to any more of these messages.”

<sup>3</sup> Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids International Communications Research Teen Excel Study, March 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Federal Trade Commission Smokeless Tobacco Report for the Years 2000 and 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Hamilton W, Turner-Bowker D, Celebucki C, and Connelly G. Cigarette advertising in magazines: the tobacco industry response to the MSA and to public pressure. *Tobacco Control* 2002; 11( Suppl II): ii54-ii58.

**Actions to Address the Problem**

Funded community partners will implement actions in order to address the problem of tobacco advertising in magazines and newspapers and continue our work to denormalize and deglamorize tobacco use and counter tobacco company marketing and promotion of tobacco products. An overview of these actions and detailed instructions can be found in the two subsequent sections of this chapter.