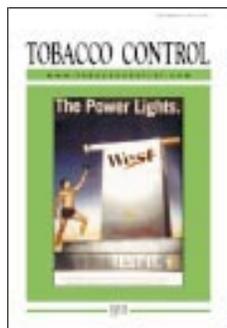


Germany: tobacco industry paradise

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Arriving in Germany, visitors are immediately confronted with the social acceptability of smoking. Even in the international airport at Frankfurt, one of the first German airports to ban smoking, authorities re-established “restricted” but open smoking areas, so that passengers are continuously exposed to environmental tobacco smoke. On most German trains, visitors will find bistros with crowds of smokers. Although smoking in public is not allowed for people aged under 16 years, nobody pays attention to the restriction—typically, parents do not interfere when their children smoke as many parents are smokers themselves. Like Japan, Germany has vending machines on almost every corner. With 80 million inhabitants, Germany has more than 800 000 vending machines, one machine for every 30 smokers with free access for adults and children day and night.

In 1998, 37% of men and 28% of women aged 18–79 smoked.¹ Smoking commences in Germany on average at 13.7 years, 13.6 for boys and 13.7 for girls. By the age of 16, 44% are regular smokers; sex specific information is not available.² As smoking is being initiated at a young age, the teenage market is obviously critical to the tobacco industry.

Advertising

Since 1974 there has been a ban on tobacco advertising on radio and TV and for advertising that suggests that smoking is harmless, healthy, or enhances physical wellbeing. Advertising may not show enjoyment during the act of smoking.

Since the 1960s the tobacco industry has agreed to voluntary advertising restrictions to prevent stronger regulations or a ban, although the prospects of such a ban being introduced now seem remote. The actual self regulation agreement signed by the tobacco industry and the government has never been made public, so the following information may be incomplete. The restrictions include: no advertising in association with health topics nor with elements that target youth, no advertising with prominent people or famous athletes, no advertising with competitive sports or using models aged under 30, no advertising in and on youth magazines, sports facilities, public transportation, aircraft, cigarette vending machines and on neon signs. Tobacco advertising within 100 metres of schools, kindergartens, and youth centres has been voluntarily abandoned. At 101 metres, it presumably does not influence children.

As the examples in this paper demonstrate, the voluntary agreements on tobacco advertising are largely ignored. For example, West advertising showing the body builder (fig 1) might not show a woman under 30, but it shows intense physical activity. West has various billboard advertisements with reference to sports—for example, people on bicycles and holding the Olympic torch (see cover). Nil targets an intellectual audience and advertises with prominent smoking actors and film makers, the ads making statements such as “imprisoned but happy”. Advertising for “light”, “mild” and “ultra” cigarettes is as common as advertising for regular cigarettes despite a voluntary agreement of restricted use of those terms.

Because of the voluntary agreements, in 1999, Philip Morris and Reemtsma were forced to pay fines after a study by the public health centre in the Hohenschönhausen district of Berlin found that there was advertising in the direct vicinity of eight schools and youth clubs. After the cigarette companies disregarded a warning from the court and continued to advertise, fines of DM 50 000 (US\$25 000) were imposed on both Philip Morris and Reemtsma.

Huge budget for billboard advertising

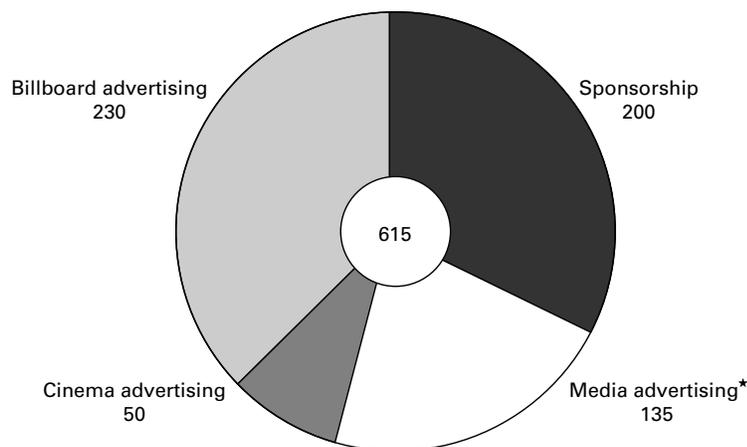
Over the last decade the German tobacco industry spent an estimated DM 5 billion (\$2.5 billion) on advertising. In 1999, the latest year for which data are available, it spent DM 615



Figure 1 Example of advertising used by West, linking the product to sporting activities.

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*Advertising on radio and TV only for non-tobacco products e.g. Camel Boots

Figure 2 Advertising spent by the German tobacco industry in 1999 (figures in Deutsche Mark (1 US\$ = 2 DM)). Print media spend not available. Source: Nielsen-Werbeforschung S+P. ZAW-Berechnungen von 1999. Hamburg 2000.

million (US\$ 310 million). Much of this was spent on billboard advertising (fig 2). Further details are not available.

MARLBORO

According to Peter Paetzel, director of marketing for Philip Morris Germany, Marlboro is not going to change its advertising strategy. Philip Morris is convinced that the brand Marlboro is a symbol for values such as personal freedom, adventure, self determination, and life in harmony with nature. The recent introduction of the “Marlboro Woman” is an expansion of the Marlboro world, a logical step forward to win the female market.³

In addition to its massive billboard campaign, Marlboro sponsors events such as “Marlboro summer work”, “Marlboro music rodeo” and Formula 1 motor racing, whose champion Michael Schumacher is the definitive German Marlboro man (fig 3).

LUCKY STRIKE

In the last two years, British American Tobacco (BAT) has invested millions in advertising Lucky Strike in all media sectors. Sales



Figure 3 Formula 1 motor racing champion Michael Schumacher—the definitive German Marlboro man.

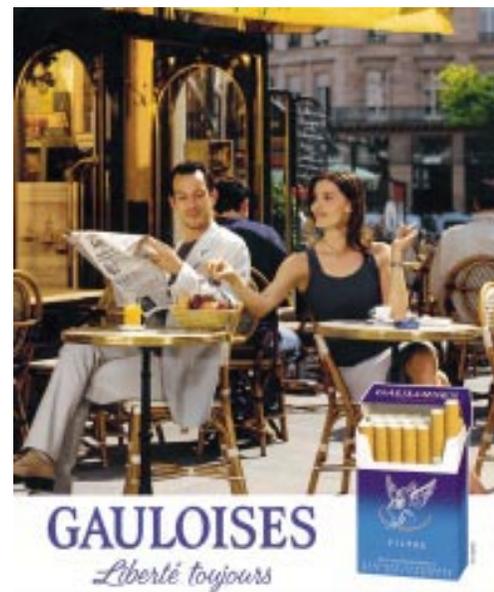


Figure 4 Advertisement for Gauloises Blondes Légères, the “light” version of the Gauloises Blondes family.

increased by 7.5% between 1999 to 2000, and figures for 2001 look even higher. The rocketing sales of Lucky Strike saw BAT overtake Reemtsma, putting BAT into second place. BAT has not made public the volume it spends on promotion. Other forms of advertising the brand are: “Lucky Strike Originals Diners”, a competition to be a “Lucky Strike Trend Scout” in New York in the summer of 2001, another to win one of the most prestigious awards for designers the “Lucky Strike Junior Award”, and hip merchandise from the “Lucky Strike Originals Collection”.

GAULOISES BLONDES

This brand has been very heavily marketed. Gauloises Blondes Légères, the “light” version of the Gauloises Blondes family, increased sales by about 31% in 2000 (fig 4).

CAMEL

Since 1985 the market share of Camel in Germany has fallen from 9% to 3%. Following a successful marketing strategy run in the Swiss, Benelux, Greek, and Spanish markets, JTI Germany is repositioning the Camel brand that was acquired by the Japanese in 1999. According to board spokesman Robert J Ramselaar, Camel is to be positioned as a cigarette for a young, white collar audience, challenging Lucky Strike and Gauloises Blondes.

The days when Camel used a rugged looking man camping for their ads are over. Now Camel advertising concentrates on the marketing of Camel events. People can participate in the “Camel Snow Crew” and go snow boarding, skydiving, and camp in an igloo for a week, or participate in the “Camel Speed Vision”, a contest for young people connected to car racing. The latest launch in the summer 2001 was the “Camel Creative Challenge”: “Make art with the camel and win one week

gallery hopping in New York". "Take the camel from a cigarette pack and make a new design". The top 20 entries will be presented on billboards and rewarded with DM 5000 (\$2500). The first prize is an additional trip to New York to the art and lifestyle scene with the invitation: "Do you want to become famous?"

New communication strategy

Until recently, the tobacco industry did everything to deny any responsibility for the consequences of smoking, but now it is doing everything possible to restore its image through corporate communication strategies similar to those it is conducting globally in the wake of the flood of damaging revelations from its internal documents. Below, we highlight some examples.

PHILIP MORRIS (PM)

In February 2001, an interview with Hermann Waldemer, new head of the board of PM Germany titled "Marlboro is not the problem, it's the solution",⁴ cited Waldemer pleading for non-smoking where non-smokers are present and described a new campaign with spots in cinemas where a 14 year old says "I don't smoke!" to prevent youth smoking. In addition PM launched a school campaign called "internet driver's licence", a computer software program that teaches children how to use the internet.

Waldemer says he agrees with some of the statements made by World Health Organization's Director General, Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland. For example, he says he agrees with disclosure of tobacco contents and says he would at any time welcome the German Ministry of Health to conduct production inspections. But significantly, he disagrees with laws that regulate tobacco contents if this means that they would deliver a product of "lower quality".⁴

PM engages itself strongly in sociopolitics—for example, through cultural sponsorship and scientific grants. Copying its US campaign, it is planning a big new initiative "Violence against women in the family setting".

Since 1983, PM has presented the Philip Morris Science Award. In 2000 the amount awarded was DM 200 000 (\$100 000). The award has been presented to scientists who present "market-stable solutions and that enhance conscious use of modern technology".⁵ For nearly two decades, PM has promoted itself with its philanthropy giving awards to highly respected scientists, most of them in research institutions with the best reputations. To date, there has been no ethical code among German research institutions to refuse tobacco funding. There is a huge lack of awareness among scientists about how the tobacco industry operates, so that famous institutions such as the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft or the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft allow their scientists to accept tobacco money.

BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO (BAT)

Since the efforts of the EU Commission to establish a European directive on banning

advertising and regulating tobacco products, and the negotiations of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control started, Germany has seen a new type of advertising attacking both the European Commission and WHO. BAT Germany took out full page advertising targeting opinion leaders in politics, jurisprudence, and the media where it set out the industry's position, describing tobacco manufacturers as concerned, responsible companies. A remarkable campaign targeting the media about its own activities tried to influence journalists. The message of the industry to the media and to opinion leaders was the well trodden slippery slope argument:

"Today they want to ban cigarette advertising, tomorrow it might be sweets advertising or automobile advertising . . ."

"We are against youth smoking because of the special danger, however, every citizen has the right to decide about his own behaviour."

"Tobacco is an expression of pleasure and not a communicable disease."⁶

BAT again launched a campaign within the last three years to portray smoking as an expression of pleasure for adults with slogans such as "only for the informed, adult smoker, who is concerned about the health risks of tobacco consumption".

The philosophy in the different types of full page advertising is: "Every cigarette that you do not smoke consciously, is one too many". The company includes slogans such as: "It's better to savour moderately than excess"; and "Dear youngsters: don't pretend to be grown up" (fig 5).⁶

REEMTSMA

Reemtsma, the manufacturer of West and Davidoff cigarettes, is a big organiser of public relations events. The most prestigious event is the "Reemtsma media event". Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission, attended a party in 2001 together with the mayor of Hamburg. Thierry Paternot, head of the board of Reemtsma welcomed around 600 guests, among them Angela Merkel, leader of the Christian Democratic party, Olaf Scholz, senator of the interior, politicians Franz Müntefering, Wolfgang Gerhard, and Rezzo Schlauch, supermodel Tasha de Vasconcelos, and many others.

Another big tobacco PR event is the Reemtsma Ladies Lunch in Berlin. In January 2001, the Fourth Ladies Lunch took place in Berlin. 200 VIP ladies were invited by the wife of the head of the Reemtsma board. The Ladies Lunch had the title "The more you know", which is the slogan of Davidoff cigarettes and was visited by female members of the German parliament, actresses, fashion designers, TV stars, members of the nobility, and big business leaders. To top it off, the event took place in the restaurant of the German parliament.

JAPAN TOBACCO INTERNATIONAL (JTI)

JTI is a relatively new company, formed when the Japan Tobacco group purchased the international operations of RJ Reynolds Inc in

Liebe Jugendliche, tut doch nicht so furchtbar erwachsen.
Eigentlich ist es ziemlich seltsam. Viele Jugendliche wollen am liebsten erwachsen werden, und manche Erwachsene tun fast alles, um möglichst jung zu scheitern. Beides ist ein wenig peinlich, weil beides nie so richtig funktioniert. Und dämlich ist es, wenn Jugendliche rauchen, weil sie meinen, man merke daran nicht, wie jung sie noch sind. Siehe dich zu einer Jugend, liebe junge Leute, und genieße sie wirklich. Du hast später noch ein paar Jahrzehnte Zeit, erwachsen zu sein. Zigaretten sind keine Verkleidung, sondern ein Genussmittel. Und auch für Erwachsene gilt: jede Zigarette, die man nicht bewusst genießt, ist eine Zigarette zuviel.

Das soll nicht Schule machen.
Du könntest die Zigaretten noch so gut verstecken und mit Pfefferminz oder Menthol erfrischen, liebe Jugendliche, irgendwann werden nur Eltern und Lehrer trotzdem bemerken, dass du rauchst. Im Alter jedoch im jungen Jahren kann rauchen besonders schädlich sein. Weil die Wachstum noch nicht abgeschlossen ist, weil die körperlichen Umwälzungen der Pubertät und die Anforderungen in Schule und Ausbildung erhöhte Belastungen bedeuten können. Keine Sorge, dass verstecktes Rauchen ein schlechtes Gewissen nur sehr geringfügig ist, und jede Zigarette, die man nicht bewusst genießt, ist eine Zigarette zuviel.

Die ES-Gesundheitsminister: Rauchen gefährdet die Gesundheit.
Manche Jugendliche fühlen sich manchmal überaus erwachsen. Doch wir wollen dies nicht, denn Zigaretten sind ein Genussmittel und keine Verkleidung.

Wir wollen nicht, dass Kinder rauchen. Weil es ihrer Gesundheit schadet und unsere Sprache.

Figure 5 Examples of BAT's campaign targeting youth smoking. Under the picture of the three young people in suits it states: "Dear youngsters, don't pretend to be grown up. Isn't it strange: many young people try acting like adults at any price, and some adults try everything to appear younger. Both seem to be a bit awkward, because it does not really work. It's ridiculous that young people believe that people won't see their young age if they smoke. Young people, do enjoy your youth and without cigarettes. You will still have some decades left to be grown up. Cigarettes aren't costumes. And for adults it's been the same: And every cigarette that you do not smoke consciously, is one too many." Under the picture of the pencil case it states: "That shouldn't be normal. (Dear young people) You can hide the cigarettes as good as possible and refresh the breath with a peppermint, anyhow your parents and your teachers will find out that you smoke. Above all: smoking in the early ages can be quite harmful. Because the growth has not been completed yet and because requirements in school and education do mean a heavy burden for young people. On top of that, smoking with a guilty conscience can never be delightful. And every cigarette that you do not smoke consciously, is one too many."

1999. The company produces Camel cigarettes. JTI concentrates more on mainstream advertising than on lobbying. Nevertheless, it usually takes part in the industry's lobbying activities.

These examples clearly show that Big Tobacco is involved in all sectors of German society, and that the acceptance of smoking and Big Tobacco is enormous. There is no ethical code in Germany that keeps opinion leaders and role models away from an industry whose products kill people.

Many thanks to David Simpson and Scott Leischow for their helpful comments.

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- 5 Deutsche Presseagentur, *Lob und Preis, Frankfurter Rundschau*, 10 April 2001:28.
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