

The Tobacco Industry in Nova Scotia and Canada

Tobacco Companies

Three companies dominate the Canadian tobacco industry: Imperial Tobacco Canada Limited, Rothmans, Benson & Hedges Inc., and JTI-Macdonald Corporation. Together, they form the **Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers' Council** (CTMC), the industry's main lobby association. The CTMC was founded in 1963, shortly after Canada began its first national non-smoking campaign.

1. Imperial Tobacco

- *Brands*: Du Maurier, Players, Matinee, Cameo
- *Promotional campaigns*: Channel 2, Rumbling Walls Events, Definiti, Definiti Magazine

2. Rothmans, Benson & Hedges

- *Brands*: Rothmans, Craven A, Benson & Hedges, Belvedere, Viscount, Mark 10
- *Promotional campaign*: Gold Club Series
- Philip Morris (Altria) owns 40% share

3. JTI-Macdonald

- *Brands*: Export A, Vantage, Macdonald

A note on Altria

In 2003, Philip Morris, a U.S.-based tobacco company, and also a major Rothmans Benson and Hedges shareholder, changed its name to Altria Group. Altria Group comprises Philip Morris USA, Philip Morris International and Kraft Foods. Philip Morris and Kraft share a common Board of Directors Chair and a common communications department.

Tobacco Industry Campaigns

Canadian tobacco companies work together to create and fund several campaigns.

- ***Operation ID, Operation ID School Zone***: a retailer education program which has been evaluated and found ineffective in reducing youth smoking.
 - Canadian Coalition for Responsible Tobacco Retailing
- ***Courtesy of Choice Program***: program aimed at defeating smoking bans in restaurants, bars and hotels.
- ***Wise Decisions***: a program designed by tobacco companies for use in schools which has been reviewed and assessed as ineffective in reducing youth smoking.
- ***Fair Air Association of Canada***: campaign aimed at defeating smoking bans

Tobacco Industry – Questions and Answers

Why are there concerns surrounding tobacco industry designed and sponsored programs?

The objectives of programs created and promoted by the tobacco industry are very different from what the industry publicly claims. The primary purposes of these programs are to:

- improve the image of the tobacco industry (they want the public to believe they are responsible corporate citizens and do not need additional controls from government);
- make tobacco use more appealing to youth;
- monopolize the time and support of well-meaning community leaders and organisations around ineffective initiatives (eg. Operation ID*); and
- defeat effective tobacco control policy.

* *Operation ID/Operation ID School Zone* is a tobacco industry retailer education program that purports to keep cigarettes out of the hands of children. Tobacco manufacturers use this program to demonstrate they are opposed to youth smoking. However, internal tobacco industry documents make it clear that *Operation ID* is a public relations exercise for the tobacco industry. An internal memo from Philip Morris reads:

“As we discussed, the ultimate means for determining the success of this program will be:

1. A reduction in legislation introduced and passed restricting or banning our sales and marketing activities;
2. Passage of legislation favourable to the industry;
3. Greater support from business, parent and teacher groups.”¹

By emphasizing the adult-only status of tobacco use, and through the message – namely that “kids shouldn’t smoke” – this program reinforces the industry’s marketing efforts which position tobacco not as an unhealthy addiction but rather an adult-only activity, a forbidden fruit and a badge of maturity.

Why should community organisations not partner with the tobacco industry?

Tobacco use kills 1600 Nova Scotians every year. An additional 200 Nova Scotians die from exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke.

By accepting tobacco industry sponsorship, community organisations are in effect partnering with an industry that:

- has known and lied about the devastating health effects of tobacco use and the effects of exposure to second-hand tobacco use, and
- actively fights against all effective tobacco control policy and programs (eg. tobacco tax increases, smoke-free policy, advertising and promotion bans, retail display bans, etc.) thereby increasing tobacco addiction among youth and adults

If the tobacco industry was truly serious about reducing youth smoking, what would it do?

If the tobacco industry was truly serious about reducing youth smoking it would:

- penalize retailers who sell to minors by prohibiting them from selling tobacco;
- stop promoting tobacco use through celebrities and activities that are popular with young people (eg. movies, cigarette girls, etc);
- stop opposing effective measures such as tax increases, advertising restrictions and bans on retail tobacco displays; and
- stop denying the full effects of second-hand tobacco smoke on health and stop fighting smoke-free legislation in Canada.

¹ Slavitt, J.J. “TI Youth Initiative.” 12 February 1991. [Philip Morris memo, available from <http://www.pmdocs.com/getallimg.asp?DOCID=2500082629>]