

TOBACCO INDUSTRY DENORMALIZATION DENORMALIZATION PLENARY MONCTON - NEW BRUNSWICK

Speaker

Garfield Mahood, Executive Director

Non-Smokers' Rights Association

Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal

World Health Organization Predicted Tobacco Mortality

Deaths from among the present population

- **500 million or one half billion deaths**
- **the mortality will equal 8 times
the deaths from World War II**
- **3 million deaths will be Canadian**

Health Canada Predicted Tobacco Mortality

Tobacco industry products and the tobacco epidemic will kill 3 million Canadians presently alive.

Agents of major epidemics

mosquito



malaria

infected water



cholera

rats



bubonic plague

tobacco industry



tobacco epidemic

**Why is the tobacco industry
like a mosquito?**

**Because both are blood-sucking,
disease-spreading parasites
which cause epidemics.**

**Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland
Director-General
World Health Organization**

Reasons why we failed to achieve our health objectives

- we did not abandon the blame-the-victim approach to tobacco control
- we failed to focus on the disease vector for the epidemic

continued

Why we failed (continued)

- we did not hold the industry accountable
- we allowed the industry to normalize its behaviour
- we failed to bring salience to the issue

Tobacco industry denormalization

Telling the truth about the industrial source of the tobacco epidemic

Tobacco industry denormalization (TID)

The tobacco industry has protected itself from legislation by promoting the belief that it is a normal, legal industry selling a normal, legal product.

continued

Tobacco industry denormalization

continued

Tobacco industry denormalization is the reversal of this process, telling people why this industry falls outside the bounds of normal, legal industries.

It is nothing more complicated than stripping the industry and its products of normalcy. It is telling the truth to address an epidemic.

Tobacco industry denormalization is not

- **deglamourization of smoking**
- **denormalization of tobacco use or
a focus on individual behaviour**
- **for clarity, it is also not
denormalization of tobacco products**

**“Lately there has been significant interest in denormalization campaigns that specifically target the tobacco industry. Within this report, these will be termed *tobacco industry denormalization campaigns*, to distinguish them from campaigns that more generally denormalize smoking behaviour.”
[emphasis in original]**

**Anne Lavack
*Tobacco Industry Denormalization
Campaigns: A Review and
Evaluation, 2001***

“The objective of these tobacco industry denormalization campaigns is to point out negative traits of the tobacco industry, including the opportunistic, manipulative, mendacious, and unethical activities in which the tobacco industry engages.”

Anne Lavack

***Tobacco Industry Denormalization
Campaigns: A Review and
Evaluation, 2001***

A brief aside

In the United States, “industry manipulation” is often the term used to describe campaigns which expose the tobacco industry’s behaviour. We use the term “tobacco industry denormalization” to avoid confusion with the practice of manipulating nicotine levels.

How important is tobacco industry denormalization?

The success of a mass media campaign will “rest on the concrete, on the granite, on the bedrock of an anti-industry strategy. If you don’t have that bedrock, your campaign will ultimately fail.”

Bruce Silverman
former President
Asher-Gould Advertising
Los Angeles

Ministerial Advisory Council on Tobacco Control

Recommendation to the minister:

“that Health Canada make tobacco industry denormalization a core component of its tobacco strategy including the planned mass media campaign”

California's success

“Exposing tobacco industry manipulation and countering pro-tobacco influences at the community level have been essential to the success of California’s program.”

Colleen Stevens
Cancer, 1998

California Department of Health billboard

**WARNING: The tobacco industry is not
your friend.**

California Department of Health Service

California Department of Health billboard



Tobacco industry denormalization should not be limited to mass media campaigns. This strategy should be a core component of other aspects of a tobacco control campaign.

For example, consider this language change:

**Smoking kills 47,000 Canadians
every year**

vs

**Tobacco industry products kill 47,000
Canadians every year**

THE INDUSTRY'S NORMALCY CAMPAIGN

- Tobacco products entered the market at a time when the risks of use were unknown
- By the time risks were known, a large percentage of the population was addicted.
- The addiction makes it extremely difficult for governments to remove the product from the market.

THE INDUSTRY'S NORMALCY CAMPAIGN

- While populations were being addicted, cigarette manufacturers were engaging in an ongoing campaign to convince legislators and the public that:

as legal enterprises marketing legal products, they are entitled to be treated in the same manner as other companies.

THE INDUSTRY'S NORMALCY CAMPAIGN

- Tobacco industry normalizing strategy involved:
 - financing political parties
 - sponsoring respected arts and sports events
 - Placing tobacco executives on hospital boards
 - Funding university courses in business ethics and corporate social responsibility
 - Funding hospital care units where half the beds are filled with the victims of tobacco industry products

THE INDUSTRY'S NORMALCY CAMPAIGN

- The industry has hidden its predatory marketing behind a veil of normalcy and rationalized its epidemic on 'free choice' rhetoric and fraud.
- While presenting themselves as a normal and legitimate industry, it
 - Lied about the risks of its products
 - Lied about addiction
 - Lied about its predatory marketing to children
 - Lied about the risks of second-hand smoke
 - Lied about its manipulation of nicotine levels

TOBACCO INDUSTRY DENORMALIZATION (TID)

- **Tells the public the truth about the industry's role as the disease vector in the development and perpetuation of the tobacco epidemic**
- **Is the reversal of the process of industry normalization promoted by cigarette manufacturers for decades**
- **Shows the public why the tobacco industry is not normal, or legitimate and falls outside the norms of behaviour of legitimate business**

TOBACCO INDUSTRY DENORMALIZATION (TID)

- **A “best practice” tobacco control tool**
- **Recommended as the 4th pillar in a comprehensive tobacco control strategy**
- **Evidence of its efficacy in the scientific literature**
- **The tobacco industry hates TID**

TID STRATEGIES

Exposing the Industry

- **Combating myths about tobacco products (e.g. that light and mild products are safer)**
- **Drawing attention to the size and the impact of tobacco industry advertising budgets and the nature of their promotional activities**
- **Drawing attention to the role of other industries and organizations in supporting the promotion and sale of tobacco**

TID STRATEGIES

- **Can be introduced in virtually all tobacco control strategies, with a goal of exposing the tobacco industry's true nature**
 - language
 - letters to editors
 - submissions to boards
 - protests
 - awareness and education
 - legislation
 - mass media

WHY TID WORKS

- **Changes social attitudes towards and increases public support for tobacco-related legislative reform (regulation of the industry and its products)**
- **Counters industry “disinformation”**
- **Harnesses teen “rebellion”**
- **Gets away from “blaming the victim”**
- **Reframes the debate**

CURRENT INDUSTRY TACTICS

- **LIES AND DECEPTION**
 - **“We don’t market to children”**
 - **the ‘light’ and ‘mild’ consumer fraud**
 - **undermining research on the risks of second-hand smoke**
 - **involvement with cigarette smuggling**

CURRENT INDUSTRY TACTICS

Junk Science

- Centre for Indoor Air Research – created to undermine scientific results on air quality
- False arguments about second-hand smoke
- economic impact argument - tobacco industry funded studies at odds with independent studies

EXAMPLES JUNK SCIENCE

- Funding research to refute independent scientific evidence another key tobacco industry strategy
- The infamous Black dog Pub study a good example of this strategy
- The study is widely promoted by the hospitality industry to oppose smoke-free policies
- The objectivity of both the study and the journal is questionable

CURRENT INDUSTRY TACTICS

- **CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY**

- donations to charities, foundations and universities

- bogus youth prevention programs

CURRENT INDUSTRY TACTICS

- **ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIP**
 - **Signage and point of sale displays**
 - **branding**
 - **power walls**
 - **movies**
 - **exploiting grey areas of the law (bar promotions)**

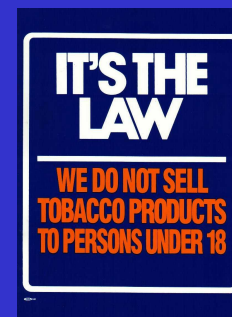
CURRENT INDUSTRY TACTICS

- **FRONT GROUPS/WORKING THROUGH THIRD PARTIES**
- **The tobacco industry uses front groups as a strategy to defeat or weaken any effective tobacco control measure.**
- **Several examples of front groups are as follows:**

Tobacco Industry Front Groups

OPERATION ID

- is a program with the alleged purpose of helping retailers not to sell tobacco to minors.
- The program is run by the Canadian Coalition for Responsible Tobacco Retailing, an organization set up by the tobacco industry.



Tobacco Industry Front Groups

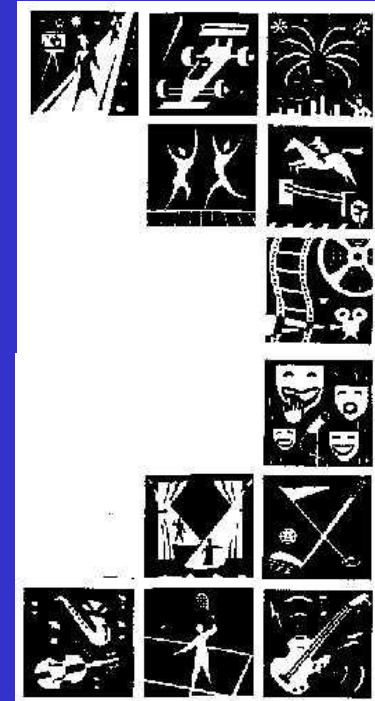
WISE DECISIONS

- another tobacco industry funded program.
- Purpose similar to Operation ID – targets Grades 6 – 8 school children.
- reinforces the usual industry position that children start smoking because of peer and family pressure.
- contains almost no information on the devastating health consequences of tobacco use.
- also doesn't address what could be considered as an effective tobacco control measure.

Tobacco Industry Front Groups

ALLIANCE FOR SPONSORSHIP FREEDOM

- Since the TPCA banned advertising in 1988, sponsorships became the ideal vehicle for the tobacco industry to promote its products.
- A total sponsorship ban was included in Bill C-71, the Tobacco Act .
- Alliance opposition to the ban led the federal government to adopt Bill C-42.
- It introduced a five year transition period before the implementation of a complete tobacco sponsorship ban.



Tobacco Industry Front Groups

REGULATORY TOXICOLOGY AND PHARMACOLOGY

- Funding research to refute independent scientific evidence is another key tobacco industry strategy.
- The infamous Black Dog Pub study is a good example of this strategy.
- The study is widely promoted by the hospitality industry to oppose smoke-free policies.
- The objectivity of both the study and the journal is questionable.



Tobacco Industry Front Groups

PUBCO

- was launched as a response by Ottawa pub and bar owners to oppose the recently passed municipal by-law.
- possible link with the tobacco industry was suggested following the publication of a newspaper ad which included a phone number referring supporters to the Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers Council.
- has since expanded its activities to other Ontario municipalities to oppose similar by-laws.



Tobacco Industry Front Groups

COURTESY OF CHOICE

- is a tobacco industry program set up to oppose effective smoking by-laws.
- advocates that it is possible to accommodate patrons in restaurants and hotels by offering smoking and non-smoking sections without any physical separation.
- also promotes ventilation as a solution to protect non-smokers from second hand smoke.



Tobacco Industry Front Groups

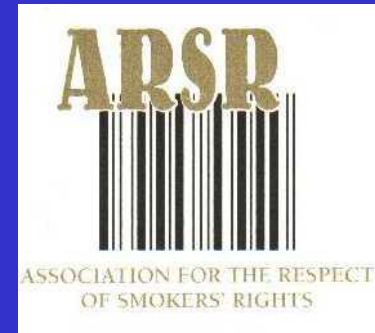
QUEBEC COALITION FOR FAIR TOBACCO TAXATION AND MATRAC

- The tobacco tax cut in 1994 was one of the most devastating public health losses as in recent history.
- The Quebec Coalition for Fair Tobacco Taxation (QCFTT) and the MATRAC (Movement for the Abolition of Taxes Reserved for Cigarettes), led the charge in Quebec that resulted in the tax rollback.

Tobacco Industry Front Groups

ASSOCIATION FOR THE RESPECT OF SMOKERS' RIGHTS

- was the latest incarnation of an association claiming to represent the rights of smokers.
- was launched in April 2000 as a response to the proposed new health warning system with pictures.



Tobacco Industry Front Groups

FAIR AIR ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

- A “new association of associations with a mandate to support the Canadian hospitality sector in its efforts to promote ventilation solutions, encourage research of ventilation options...”
- Its Executive Director admitted publicly that they receive “substantial funding from the tobacco industry”.

Tobacco Industry Front Groups

ONTARIO RESTAURANT, HOTEL AND MOTEL ASSOCIATION (ORHMA)

- Has been active in opposing smoke-free by-law proposals in the GTA, Sault Ste. Marie, and other parts of Ontario
- Has collaborated with the Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers' Council in promoting ventilation solutions as an alternative to 100% smoke-free laws

Tobacco Industry Front Groups

CANADIAN RESTAURANT AND FOOD ASSOCIATION (CRFA)

- Has been active in opposing smoke-free by-law proposals in the GTA, Sault Ste. Marie, and other parts of Ontario
- Has collaborated with the Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers' Council in promoting ventilation solutions as an alternative to 100% smoke-free laws

LOCAL APPROACHES TO TID

- **Counter institutional presence**
 - expose promotional activities on university campuses (LTPB)
 - expose funding of university courses (NSRA, U. of Sask. Students' Union)
 - expose tobacco industry executive presence on hospital boards (CCS, NSRA)

- **Counter tobacco industry front groups**
 - Operation ID (e.g. Kingston Health Unit)
 - Wise Decisions (Quebec public health officials)
 - PUBCO (Ottawa Public Health Dept.)

LOCAL APPROACHES TO TID

COUNTER TACTICS

- **Conduct environmental scan of local tobacco industry activity (e.g. PUBCO, bar promotions, etc.)**
- **Educate your community on industry tactics by:**
 - **letters to the editor**
 - **letters and presentations to key partners and organizations**
 - **educating youth and schools on industry tactics**
 - **educating local politicians**

LOCAL APPROACHES TO TID

- **Seize the moment!**
 - **expose tobacco industry involvement whenever and wherever possible**
 - **local politicians will react differently if they know the industry is behind a local activity (e.g. business person speaking on behalf of PUBCO)**

Mass media campaigns

1. should have clear communications objectives
2. bring salience to the issue
3. should not ignore 3 out of 4 viewers/
listeners/readers who do not smoke

continued

Mass media campaigns (continued)

4. because education, by itself, has had limited success in changing smoking behaviour, use mass media campaigns to influence attitudes and to create public support for policy and law reform. Public policy and law reform can change behaviour.

Non-Smokers' Rights Association

Effective mass media themes

1. tobacco industry denormalization (TID) or industry manipulation
2. second-hand smoke (SHS)

Goldman and Glantz, *JAMA*

continued

Effective mass media themes, when mixed with tobacco industry denormalization and SHS themes

3. addiction

4. cessation

Goldman and Glantz, *JAMA*

Ineffective mass media themes

1. youth access
2. short term effects
(e.g. bad breath)
3. long-term health effects
4. romantic rejection

Goldman and Glantz, *JAMA*

Tobacco control ads should be

1. ambitious
2. hard-hitting
3. explicit
4. in-your-face

Ads should “clearly refer to the tobacco industry rather than to ‘they’ or ‘them.’ ”

Goldman and Glantz, *JAMA*

Tobacco control ads should

1. reframe the debate,
focus on the industry
2. use real people
3. explain the consequences
4. use blunt, in-your-face messages
5. mobilize opinion

Greg Connolly
Massachusetts Campaign