

Flavoured Tobacco

How the Industry Bait's its Prey

In recent years, tobacco manufacturers have flooded the market with fruit, alcohol and even candy-flavoured cigars and smokeless tobacco products. While the use of additives to improve flavour and odour is not new to the tobacco industry, the brazen marketing of chocolate, bubble gum, vanilla, banana split, mint and other flavours that are attractive to youth is unprecedented. Flavoured tobacco products appear even more kid-friendly and amusing as manufacturers coordinate the packaging to the flavour.

Internal tobacco industry documents clearly reveal why the companies are doing this. These additives are:

- **Designed to make the first smoking experience more pleasurable** by improving the taste and sensations for smokers and “chewers”
- **Designed to encourage experimentation**
- **Designed to make smoking easier** by masking the irritation on airways, preventing airways from tightening and preventing the smoker from coughing (coughing is the body’s way of protecting lungs from inhaling harmful substances).
- **Designed to make smoking trendy and dynamic**
- **Designed to disguise the smell of second-hand smoke**, and reduce concerns and complaints from non-smokers near smokers

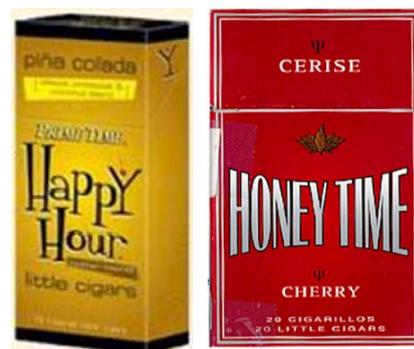
Designed to make the first smoking experience more pleasurable

Flavourings reduce the unpleasant smell and taste of their products. A former Philip Morris employee explained “the harshness and bitterness of nicotine is not acceptable alone in a cigarette. There is strong scientific evidence to support both the need for nicotine in the products and the need to modify its flavor to make its delivery acceptable to the smoker.”¹

The addition of flavouring agents to tobacco products makes the smoking experience “better” – especially for new smokers. An RJR Tobacco executive saw “chocolate/vanillin/ licorice/tobacco enhancers” as an exciting development which “appears to have and consumption, especially among young people.”^{2,3}

Tobacco Products in Canada are flavoured with:

*Appletini
Banana Split
Blueberry
Bubble Gum
Cherry
Chocolate Mint
Cinnamon
Clove
Coconut
Cosmo
Cotton Candy
Grape
Mango
Menthol
Mint
Orange Liqueur
Peach
Peanut Butter and Jam
Pina Colada
Raspberry
Rum
Spearment
Strawberry
Tangerine
Tequila
Vanilla
Wildberry
Wintergreen
Watermelon
Whisky*



Designed to encourage experimentation.

Tobacco companies have previously acknowledged that flavours grab the interest of potential smokers and make them more likely to want to experiment with smoking. In an internal industry presentation, thus was caked a “high curiosity to try factor.”⁴

Flavourings make tobacco products seem less threatening and less harmful and more fun and interesting. As a result, young people who may never even try smoking cigarettes can be enticed by “taste-me” new flavours and “trial-friendly” packaging.

In Canada, the popularity of small cigars previously only available in rum or sweet wine flavours has soared since cherry, field berries, vanilla, mint, chocolate, roasted honey and other amusing flavours have been introduced.

This approach has been so successful that

- **One third of Canadian youth has tried these products** (and one tenth are recent users).⁵
- **There has been an eightfold increase in sales in only 6 years.** Sales in Canada jumped from 53 million units in 2001 to 276 million units in 2006, and to a whopping 403 million in 2007.⁶

FROM A BUSINESS POINT-OF-VIEW: MARKETING BENEFITS

• WE HAVE SIGHTED SOME COMPELLING BENEFITS:

• HIGH CURIOSITY-TO-TRY FACTOR

• HIGH CURIOSITY-TO-TRY FACTOR

- POTENTIAL TO RETAIN BRAND LOYALTY BY OFFERING EXPERIENTIAL CHOICES WITHIN ONE BRAND, CAPITALIZING ON CURRENT ALTERNATE PURCHASING BEHAVIOR OF SWITCHING FROM NON-MENTHOL ONCE IN AWHILE JUST FOR A CHANGE OF PACE
- POTENTIAL FOR CONCRETE “ADDED VALUE” TO COUNTER PRICE PURCHASING
- OPPORTUNITY TO RESTIMULATE ATTENTION TO THE BRAND VIA NEW FLAVOR INTRODUCTIONS FROM TIME TO TIME

Philip Morris, 1992 No. Bates 2048207530

Designed to make smoking easier

Some additives reduce the discomfort of smoking. As a result, they stop smokers from feeling the early warning symptoms of respiratory disease and upper airways irritation.

Menthol cigarettes and Kreteks (clove flavored cigarettes, largely imported from Indonesia) are easier to smoke because the both menthol and eugenol (the active ingredient in cloves) are topical anesthetics.

Smokers of these products can experience less throat and upper airway irritation which could otherwise lead them to stop smoking.⁷ Cigarettes made with these ingredients make it easier for new smokers to continue smoking and to absorb the nicotine that leads to addiction.

Menthol’s characteristic minty taste and smell lures some smokers to think these products are different or less harmful than other cigarettes. However, studies have not shown menthol smokers to experience fewer withdrawal symptoms or better quitting rates.⁸

Cocoa based flavourings are also added to some types of cigarettes. These additives cause the smokers’ airways to dilate, allowing the smoke an easier and deeper passage into the lungs and greater intake of nicotine.⁹

Flavoured cigarettes are, without doubt, a sector of the tobacco product market that is growing and will continue to grow.

Tobacco Journal International¹⁰

Designed to make smoking trendy and dynamic

Although menthol has been added to cigarettes for decades, the way menthol cigarettes are designed and marketed has changed dramatically in recent years.

Recent trends in marketing menthol include:

- New brands
- New cigarette designs
- New packaging

Two of the multinational tobacco companies operating in Canada (BAT and JTI) have recently launched menthol cigarettes with a novelty design feature likely to encourage experimentation. (The filter contains a menthol capsule that, when crushed, releases a sudden surge of flavouring). Smoking is made more dynamic by the invitation to **Squeeze, Click, Change.**

This new generation of menthol products are successful at recruiting smokers. Trade analysts report that while sales of traditional cigarettes are falling, the market for menthol cigarette is not declining as rapidly.^{11,12} While only one menthol cigarette brand ranked among the 10 top premium brands in 2005, three menthol cigarette brands made the list in 2008.¹³

Just as demand for cigarillos increased when manufacturers began offering a wide array of flavoured little cigars and tobacco rolling papers (blunts), Canadians



should expect the menthol market to expand as manufacturers put more energy and dollars to stimulate growth and boost sales of menthol products, as they have done in the US.

In Canada, the market share for menthol cigarettes is considerably smaller than it is in the United States, where tobacco companies have aggressively marketed menthol cigarettes to Black Americans. The market share in Canada (at 2%)¹⁴ is now much lower than in the United States (at 27%)¹⁵. If – **when** – the new generation of menthol products are introduced in Canada, this may change.

Designed to disguise the smell of second-hand smoke.

With the public better informed on dangers of secondhand smoke, smokers face greater social pressures to quit smoking.

Manufacturers are eager to provide smokers with alternatives to quitting, such as cigarettes that smell less. Manufacturers offer smokers with “cleaner” and “less problematic” smokes thanks to their LSS (Less Smoke Smell) technology.

These cigarettes use flavourings like vanilla to mask the scent. Although the smell and visibility of the tobacco smoke may be less distasteful, it is just as harmful.

Reducing the smell of second-hand smoke may reduce complaints from non-smokers, and make smoking less socially undesirable. Non smokers may also be less likely to remove themselves from the presence (and harms) of the second-hand smoke.



Mirage, a cigarette brand marketed as producing less of a smoke smell. Launched in Canada in December 2007 by JTI Macdonald.

Not just for smokers

Smokeless tobacco is also mixed with flavours likely to increase trial, experimentation and eventual addiction.

Since 2005, around the time candy-flavoured chew appeared in Canada, chew use began increasing, reversing a 17 year decline dating back to 1998.¹⁶ **15 to 19 year olds represent one quarter of all smokeless tobacco users, even though they are less than 7% of the population.**¹⁷

In 2006, the National Smokeless Tobacco Company announced that 7 of the top 10 best selling smokeless products were flavoured and boasted that their business had grown thanks to new flavours and pouched oral tobacco.¹⁸



Recent public measures to stop the sale of “candy-coated” tobacco products

In recent years, several governments have introduced measures to curb the use of flavourings in tobacco products.

Australia

The sale of most confectionary-flavoured, confectionary-scented and fruit-flavoured or fruit-scented cigarettes is banned in ACT,¹⁹ NSW²⁰ and South Australia²¹. Tasmania has gone further by extending the ban to all tobacco products and rolling papers.²² Tobacco products flavoured with menthol, nut and seed flavouring agents (coffee, pepper, etc.) remain legal.

United States

The state of Maine bans the import and sale of cigarettes and cigars that contain a “constituent that imparts a characterizing flavor,” meaning a “distinguishable taste or aroma that is imparted to tobacco or tobacco smoke either prior to or during consumption, other than a taste or aroma from tobacco, menthol, clove coffee, nuts or peppers”, except for those that were on the market prior to 1985.²³ Some mentholated and flavoured cigarettes and cigars remain legal.

Under a 2006 agreement with Attorney Generals from forty states, Reynolds Tobacco agreed to stop selling some brands of flavoured cigarettes, and to abstain from

naming, marketing or evoking candy, fruit and alcohol flavored cigarettes in the future.²⁴ The agreement exempts all menthol-flavoured products. Moreover, the bill that would the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate tobacco, would ban flavoured cigarettes, but exempts menthol.²⁵

Canada

Ontario became the first Canadian jurisdiction to ban flavoured cigarillos, and its legislation has the power to ban other category of flavoured to products.²⁶ As of May 26, 2009, this law had not been put into force.

Backbench legislators in Nova Scotia²⁷ and the federal House of Commons²⁸ have tabled legislation that would ban the addition to tobacco products of any flavouring additive other than tobacco and sugar.

On May 26 2009, Canada’s Health Minister tabled Bill C-32,²⁹ which would ban flavoured cigarillos, cigarettes and blunts (tobacco rolling papers), but exempt menthol as an additive. The ban on flavourings does not extend to kreteks (clove cigarettes) or chewing tobacco, even though these products are also successfully targeting youth.³⁰

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