

# CURRENT ACTIVITIES

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Tobacco companies use myriad activities to promote their products. These diverse activities work in concert to create an environment in which tobacco products have positive lifestyle associations for consumers, and positive corporate images for policy-makers.

The following is a survey of some of the tactics currently being used to promote tobacco products in Canada.

## EVENT SPONSORSHIP

Tobacco companies have been using event sponsorships to promote their products for years.

From car races to rock concerts, sporting and cultural events provide powerful opportunities for tobacco companies to shape their brands' images. Simply put, by sponsoring an event, a brand ties that event's image to its own.

Social research allows marketers to keep up to date with the latest trends among youth and other target groups, enabling them to sponsor maximally effective events.



While the parameters within which they can pursue this strategy are narrowing due to legislation, tobacco marketers continue to find ways to make connections between the images of events and the images of their products.

*“Marketing activities have historically been and continue to be targeted at younger smokers.”*

*- Imperial Tobacco Marketing Document (D-176)*

### BARS AND CLUBS

Tobacco companies have recently modernized their product promotions by hosting high budget parties, concerts, and club nights aimed at young urbanites.

The events, heavily advertised and promoted using trademark graphics and colours, not only give the companies a hip image, but they give them a captive audience as well – the sponsoring brand’s logos, colours, and products pervade the events.



### GIVEAWAYS

Marketers extend the impact of these events by giving away freebies such as CDs, screen savers, and key chains.



### BAR PROMOTIONS

Posters and signs promoting cigarettes are found in bars – even in the bathrooms!



## WEBSITES

Increasingly, the image associations established through sponsorship activities are being supported by industry-operated websites.

Visually and conceptually, these websites mirror the promoted product's branding by tying its trademark colours and graphics to lifestyle images and content.

These websites also serve as database builders. By asking users to sign up for updates and contests, the sites collect valuable



DuMaurier's [www.RedSeat.ca](http://www.RedSeat.ca) features articles about music and nightlife.

contact information that can later be used for direct-mail promotions.

*“Generally speaking, ads that identified with 'adventure or sex' were said to more likely appeal to the teen and even pre-teen segment.”*  
 - Export 'A' Marketing Document (D-184)

## PRINT ADS

When a tobacco company sponsors or hosts an event, they spend substantial sums advertising it (and thus the sponsoring product). Most of this advertising takes the form of print ads in magazines and newspapers aimed at the brand's target audience.

Since the youth market is so crucial to sales success, the majority of the ads appear in publications aimed at

that audience. For example, one of the primary venues for tobacco sponsorship advertising is free urban weeklies – papers which have younger audiences and hipper images than dailies.

By advertising in these papers, tobacco companies not only reach a young audience, but do so while forming an image connection between themselves and the

'alternative' paper.



## PHYSICIANS FOR A SMOKE-FREE CANADA

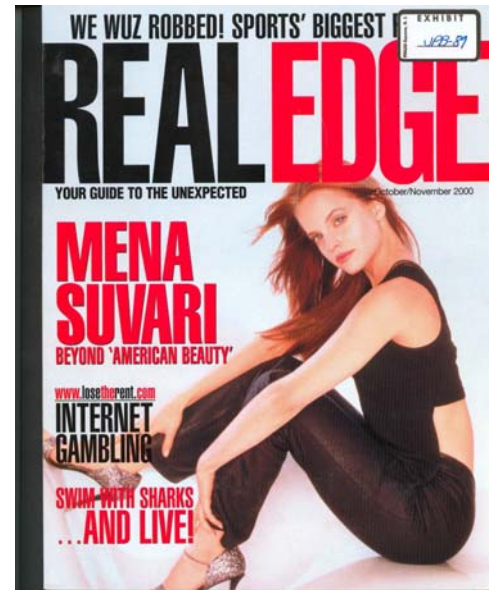
1226-A Wellington St.  
Ottawa, ON  
CANADA  
K1Y 3A1

Phone: 613-233-4878  
Fax: 613-233-7797

## DIRECT MAIL MAGAZINES

Following the lead of their American counterparts, tobacco companies operating in Canada have also started to move their advertising into consumers' homes through direct mail magazines.

These magazines, modeled on popular men's and women's life-style magazines, feature numerous ads for the sponsoring company's brands alongside editorial content that glamorizes risk and advocates defiance of authority.



## POINT OF SALE ADVERTISING

While the multiple points of contact between companies and consumers generated by the above strategies are crucial in shaping ideas and feelings about different products, advertising at the point of sale remains a key component of tobacco marketing. Venues where cigarettes are sold, such as convenience stores and gas stations, are packed with promotional messages. Companies compete for trademark presence by fur-

nishing stores with branded clocks, signs, matches, and change trays; and compete for the best shelf space – shelf space in a direct line of sight from the counter – by paying cash premiums. Sometimes, the intensity of point of sale marketing is increased by rewarding successful retailers with bonus commissions for each pack of a particular brand of cigarettes they sell.

