



[www.media-awareness.ca](http://www.media-awareness.ca)

**Level:** Grades 8-10

**About the Author**

Jane Tallim is MNet's education specialist.

## Lesson Plan

# Tobacco Advertising in Canada

### Overview

In this lesson, students explore the ways in which tobacco products are marketed in Canada. The lesson begins with a class discussion about the ways in which tobacco products are promoted in Canadian society. Students then discuss Canadian law as it pertains to tobacco advertising and debate whether or not the government has been successful in restricting the promotion of tobacco products. Students explore the ways in which tobacco companies use sponsorship, promotions, retail displays, awards, clothing and collectibles as a way to reach consumers – despite advertising restrictions. Students also discuss which of these strategies are most likely to influence teens, and the relationship between advertising and other factors that may contribute to smoking. The lesson concludes with a neighborhood “tobacco audit” conducted by students to determine whether or not tobacco is promoted locally.

### Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate:

- an awareness of the strategies uses by tobacco advertisers to engage customers and specific target groups
- an understanding of Canadian laws relating to tobacco advertising
- an awareness of the challenges in enforcing Canadian legislation that prohibits tobacco advertising

### Preparation and Materials

Photocopy the student handouts:

- *Tobacco Advertising and Canadian Law*
- *Cigarette Advertising in Canada*
- *Tobacco Promotion in Canada*
- *Tobacco Audit*
- *Canadian Retailers and Cigarette Promotion*

### Procedure

#### Guided Discussion

In Canada, tobacco companies must adhere to Canada’s Tobacco Act (1997) which regulates the manufacture, sale, labelling and promotion of tobacco products. However, the existence of this Act doesn’t mean that tobacco companies aren’t marketing their products.

According to Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada, in 1998 – one year after the Act came into effect – Canadian tobacco companies spent over \$32 million advertising their products. In 2000, tobacco advertising expenditures cashed in at just under \$20 million. (These figures don't include the whopping \$70 million a year that tobacco companies spend promoting cigarettes at retail outlets.)

Ask students to brainstorm the ways in which tobacco products are promoted in Canada, and write the answers on the board. (List specific examples for each.)

Answers may include:

- Sponsorship of sporting, arts or cultural events  
(*Export A: Extreme Sports Events; Craven A "Just for Laughs" comedy festival; Team Players racing*)
- Awards Programs  
(*Matinee Fashion Foundation awards for new designers*)
- Retail promotions and displays  
(*countertop displays, product give-aways, contests, exterior posters, in-store posters, clocks, shelving*)
- Clothing and collectibles  
(*souvenirs from sporting events, etc.*)
- Magazine advertisements in U.S. publications sold in Canada  
(*especially youth-oriented magazines such as Rolling Stone*)
- Product placement in movies/celebrity smokers  
(*a number of top-level actors – Brad Pitt, Keanu Reeves, Leonardo DiCaprio, Winona Ryder, Kate Hudson, Nicole Kidman and Julia Roberts – have smoked in some of their movies*)

Ask students:

- What is the goal of advertising campaigns such as these?
- Why is brand loyalty and recognition so important to the cigarette industry?

Write "Parity Products" on the blackboard. Ask students to define what a parity product is, and to give some examples. (*Parity products are those whose qualities differ very slightly from brand to brand. It doesn't really matter which is purchased, as all perform about the same. Parity products include gasoline, soft drinks, cigarettes, milk, cola and beer.*)

Because three companies control the Canadian tobacco market – Imperial Tobacco, (69.8%) JTI MacDonald, (12.4%) and Rothman's, Benson & Hedges (17.6%) – and because most Canadian tobacco products are made from tobacco grown in Southern Ontario, there is little to distinguish one brand from another. Instead, Canadian tobacco companies rely on brand recognition and customer loyalty to promote their products. In the U.S. studies have consistently shown that the most popular brands of cigarettes are those that are most heavily advertised.

Distribute *Tobacco Advertising and Canadian Law* and discuss it with students. To see how the Tobacco Act has influenced tobacco promotion, review the sample ads in the *Cigarette Advertising in Canada* overhead.

- Do students feel that the Canadian government has been successful in its goal to prohibit the promotion of tobacco products in this country?

- Given the choice between traditional tobacco ads (available in American-based magazines), sponsorship of events by tobacco companies, retail promotions and displays, and smoking and product placement in films, which of these do students believe are most likely to influence the smoking preferences of teens? Why?
- Ask students to rank all factors that contribute to teen smoking. Which factor is most significant? Which is least significant? And where does advertising and promotion of tobacco products come in?

Review *Canadian Retailers and Cigarette Promotion* with students. Currently, retailers in Canada are permitted to display branded tobacco displays, products and accessories.

- If you were a Canadian law-maker, would you place restrictions on the retail promotion of tobacco products? What would they be?
- Discuss this issue from the perspective of:
  - a Health Canada official
  - a teenager
  - a lawyer
  - a tobacco manufacturer
  - the owner of a small convenience store

## Activities

### Tobacco Promotion Worksheet

Distribute *Tobacco Promotion in Canada* worksheet to students. Have them complete the form, focusing in particular on the target audience of the promotion and the purpose of the tobacco manufacturer – what associations does the company want consumers to make about its brand through this promotion? Discuss the answers as a class.

### Tobacco Tour

Ask your students: “Does tobacco have a presence in Canada?” To answer, they will participate in an audit of tobacco advertisements in their own neighbourhood. (Students could take along a camera to document billboards and other outdoor advertising and promotion.) Using the *Tobacco Audit* sheet as a guide, students will visit grocery stores, convenience stores and gas stations for signs of tobacco promotion, as well as searching the streets. Students will then evaluate the information collected, and develop a presentation of their findings to the class.

### Evaluation

- Completed *Tobacco Audit* sheets and presentations

### Related MNet lessons about tobacco are listed in:

- Teaching About Tobacco: Guidelines for Teachers (educational backgrounder)

### Recommended Reading, Viewing, Surfing

- Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada, [www.smoke-free.ca/default.htm](http://www.smoke-free.ca/default.htm)

## **Tobacco Advertising and Canadian Law**

### **Summary of the Canadian Tobacco Act**

In 1997, the *Tobacco Act* was enacted to regulate the manufacturing, sale, labelling and promotion of tobacco products in Canada.

The catch-all phrase “promotion” means representation of a product or service in a way that is likely to influence and shape the public’s attitudes and beliefs and buying behaviour. Aspects of tobacco promotion addressed in the Act include direct means such as advertisements, sponsorships and retail marketing; and also less direct means, such as the portrayal of tobacco in the movies, and in foreign media.

### **Advertisements**

According to section 22 of the Act, tobacco companies may only promote their products:

- In publications delivered directly to an identified adult through the mail; or that have a known adult readership of not less than eighty-five per cent;
- In places where young people aren’t permitted by law, such as bars or taverns;
- By highlighting actual brand characteristics (brand-preference advertising) or by providing factual information about the characteristics, availability or price of the product (information advertising).

Tobacco companies may not:

- Use “lifestyle” advertising featuring glamour, recreation, excitement, vitality, risk or daring, or other associations that might appeal to young persons.
- Depict (in whole or in part) any tobacco product, or its package or brand — or even any imagery that might evoke a product or brand (section 22)
- Sponsor youth-oriented activities or events (section 24)
- Include the name of a tobacco product or manufacturer as part of the name of a permanent sports or cultural facility (section 25)

### **Sponsorship**

Traditionally, sponsoring sporting, arts, and cultural events have been an effective way for tobacco companies to build brand recognition and reach consumers. But in 1998, amendments to the *Tobacco Act* placed restrictions on tobacco sponsorship and promotion. The new restrictions were phased in gradually, over a five-year period. (This was done to give organizers time to find new sponsors.) This amendment states that:

- Events supported by the tobacco industry before April 1997 could continue receiving such support for the five-year transition period.

- Tobacco companies could still feature promotional materials for sponsored events at the site of the event for its duration.
- Limitations on off-site sponsorship promotion would be implemented gradually. Tobacco brand names or elements would be confined to the bottom 10 per cent of any promotional display surface; and distribution of those materials would be limited to direct mailings to identified adults, and advertisements in adult publications, taverns and bars, and at the site of the event itself.

By the end of the five-year transition period (October 2003), tobacco sponsorship promotions and the display of tobacco brand elements in or on permanent facilities would be prohibited altogether.

### **Accessories**

- Manufacturers and retailers are permitted to sell accessories that display brand elements related to tobacco products, but only to adults (section 26).
- Tobacco manufacturers are not permitted to display such brand elements on non-tobacco products that are likely to appeal to young people (section 27(a)).
- Tobacco manufacturers are not permitted to give away branded non-tobacco products – they must either be sold directly, or given away as “freebies” only after tobacco products have been purchased (section 29).

### **Retail Promotions**

Under section 30 of the *Tobacco Act*, retailers are permitted to display branded tobacco products and accessories, as well as signs that indicate the availability of tobacco products and their prices.

### **Tobacco in Movies**

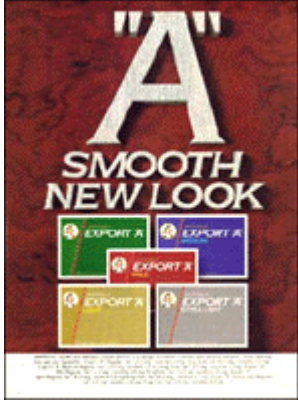
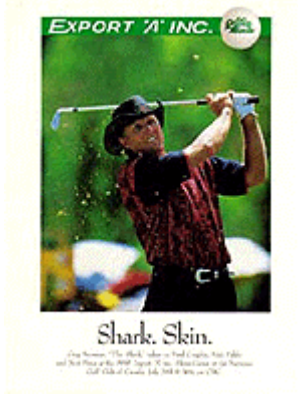

The Act’s definition of “promotion” **doesn’t** include tobacco products or brands that are used or depicted in a literary, dramatic, musical, cinematographic, scientific, educational or artistic works, productions or performances – as long as the tobacco company isn’t paying for the inclusion of the tobacco product or brand (section 18).

### **Foreign Media**

Although the Act doesn’t place restrictions on tobacco advertising and publications, broadcasts or communications from outside Canada, Canadian tobacco manufactures are not permitted to use foreign ads, campaigns or information to promote their products or bands if they contravene the regulations in Canada’s *Tobacco Act* (section 31(3)).

Table 1

## Cigarette Advertising in Canada

 <p>The advertisement shows a large white letter 'A' on a dark red background. Below the 'A' is the text 'SMOOTH NEW LOOK'. Underneath are four packs of Export A cigarettes in different colors: green, purple, red, and yellow.</p>	<p><b>Before January 1, 1989</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There were no legal restrictions on cigarette advertisements.</li><li>• However, tobacco companies had to refrain from direct advertising on television or radio.</li><li>• Models and other images were allowed to convey lifestyle associations.</li><li>• Tobacco companies voluntarily placed health warnings (in small print).</li></ul>
 <p>The advertisement shows a golfer in a dark shirt and cap in mid-swing, hitting a golf ball. The text 'EXPORT A INC.' is at the top, and 'Shark Skin.' is at the bottom. Small text at the bottom reads: 'The Finest 70 Ball, Made in England, 100% Pure and Not Packed With Gum, 100% Pure and Not Packed With Gum, 100% Pure and Not Packed With Gum, 100% Pure and Not Packed With Gum.'</p>	<p><b>1989 – 1995</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Tobacco Products Control Act banned all direct advertisements.</li><li>• However, shell companies (such as Players Racing Inc.) were able to place sponsorship advertisements that included celebrities.</li><li>• There were no restrictions on where these ads could appear, and sponsorship ads appeared on television.</li><li>• Health warnings were not included.</li></ul>
 <p>The advertisement shows a sailboat on a wooden stand. The text 'Expressive.' is at the top. Below the sailboat is a pack of Expressive cigarettes. At the bottom, it says 'experience more. experience taste.' and 'Health Canada advises that smoking is addictive and causes lung cancer, emphysema and heart disease.'</p>	<p><b>September 1995 – April 1997</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The decisions of the Supreme Court to strike down the Tobacco Products Control Act created a legal void for tobacco advertisements.</li><li>• The industry voluntarily refrained from portraying human figures in direct advertising, although other images were used to convey lifestyle associations.</li><li>• Health warnings were placed voluntarily.</li></ul>



### April 1997 – 2000

- The Tobacco Act restricted tobacco advertising.
- However, the Act did not require tobacco companies to include health warnings on advertisements, and the industry did not include them voluntarily.
- Sponsorship advertisements continued to portray human figures and lifestyle imagery.



### October 2000

- On October 1, 2000, the government imposed restrictions on sponsorship advertising – but tobacco companies were still able to run advertisements like this one in newspapers; direct mailings; and in bars.

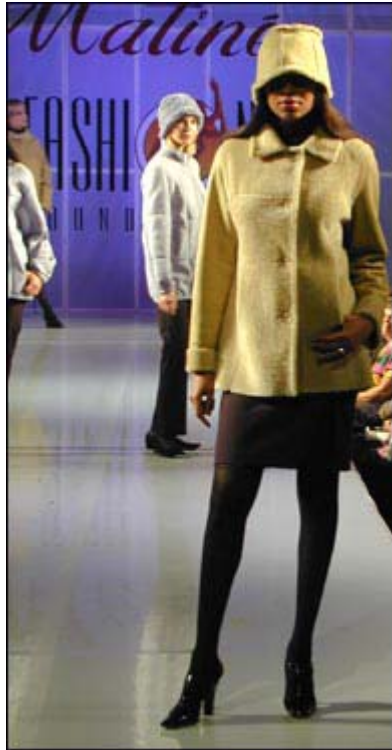
Source: *Cigarette Marketing*  
Physicians for a Smoke Free Canada  
[http://www.smoke-free.ca/eng\\_issues/govt\\_lifestyle.htm](http://www.smoke-free.ca/eng_issues/govt_lifestyle.htm)

**Student Handout #3**

**Table 2**

**Canadian Tobacco Promotion**

	<p><b>Type of promotion:</b></p> <p><b>Target audience:</b></p> <p><b>Brand association/strategy:</b></p>
	<p><b>Type of promotion:</b></p> <p><b>Target audience:</b></p> <p><b>Brand association/strategy:</b></p>



**Type of promotion:**

**Target audience:**

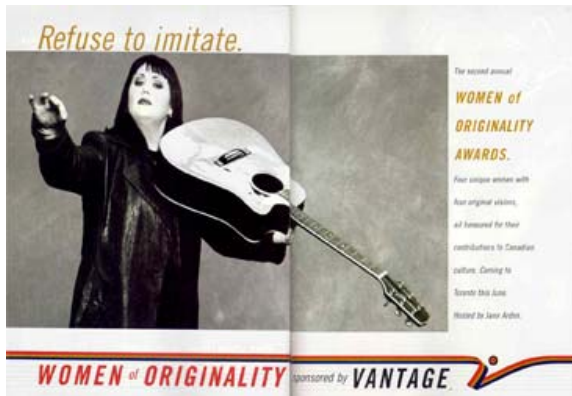
**Brand association/strategy:**



**Type of promotion:**

**Target audience:**

**Brand association/strategy:**



**Type of promotion:**

**Target audience:**

**Brand association/strategy:**



**Type of promotion:**

**Target audience:**

**Brand association/strategy:**



**Type of promotion:**

**Target audience:**

**Brand association/strategy:**



**Type of promotion:**

**Target audience:**

**Brand association/strategy:**



**Type of promotion:**

**Target audience:**

**Brand association/strategy:**

Student Handout #4  
**Tobacco Audit**

Name:

Date of audit:

Brand name/manufacturer:

Type of promotion: billboard - poster - lighted sign - point of sale display - vending machine - other:

Product/event:

Size of the display:	
Height above ground:	
Are tobacco products for sale nearby?	
Is candy being sold near tobacco products?	
Is there a special promotional deal offering discounts or premiums?	
Is the advertisement located near a school, video arcade or in a mall? (Identify which one)	

Is a warning label visible?	
Is it legible?	
What does it say?	

Photo or drawing of promotion:

Comments:

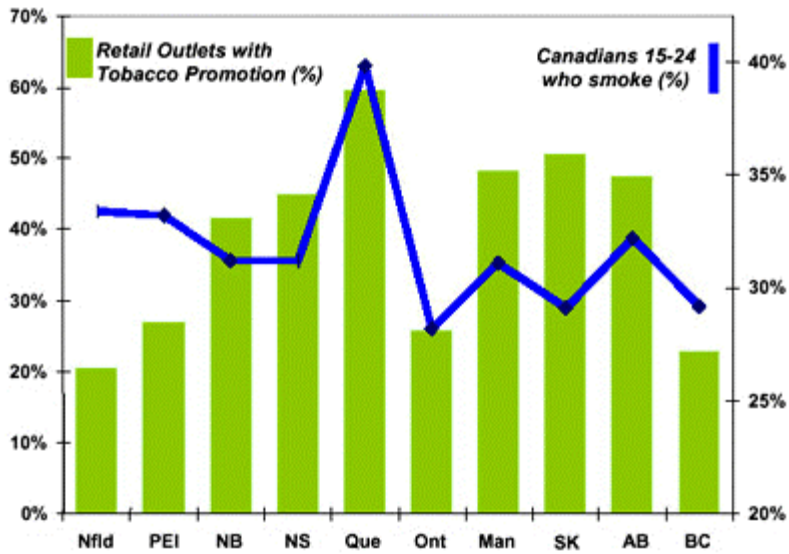
*Adapted, with permission, from the BADvertising Institute Web site*

**Table 3**

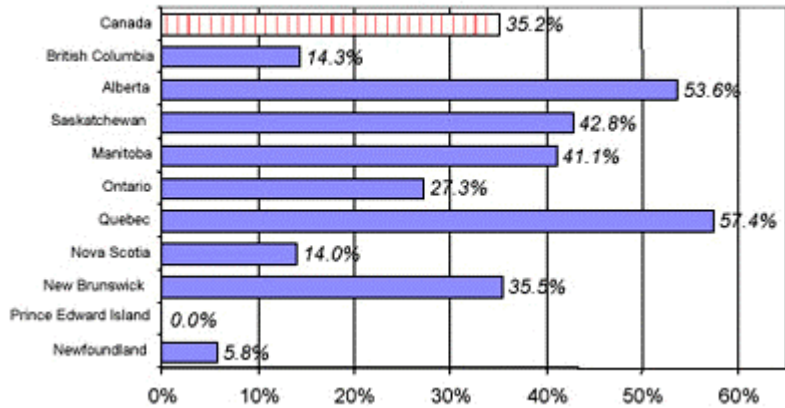
### **Canadian Retailers and Cigarette Promotion**

- In 2000 the Canadian Tobacco Manufacturer's Council spent \$70 million on retail promotions, including payment, to retailers – more than it spent on all other forms of tobacco advertising.
- Retail promotions and displays included counter-top displays, product give-aways, contests, exterior posters, in-store posters, clocks and other displays, and display shelving.
- According to Physicians for a Smoke Free Canada, in 2000, 20,000 Canadian retailers displayed some form of tobacco promotion.
- In 2000, ACNielsen found that 4 in 10 retailers were willing to sell cigarettes to children.
- ACNielsen estimates that the average retailer is paid \$1,500 to promote tobacco in stores.
- Thirteen-to-fourteen-year-olds are most likely to notice and remember in-store tobacco promotions.
- Youth smoking is higher in areas where there are higher levels of retail promotion.

### Retail Promotion and Smoking by Young Canadians



### % Canadian Retailers displaying tobacco promotions, 2000



Source: *Tobacco in Canada, 2002* and *Retail Promotion of Cigarettes, 1999*  
*Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada*