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A STUDY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE IN THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY:
MISUSE AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

by
Andrew M. Casper

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree in the Graduate Division
of Rowan College
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Approved by _____

Professor

Date Approved 5-15-96

Abstract

Casper, Andrew M.

A Study of Public Relations Practice
in the Tobacco Industry: Misuse and
Social Responsibility
Thesis Advisor: Dr. Donald Bagin
Public Relations, 1996

The study's major purpose was to improve the quality and reputation of public relations practice in private industry. The study examined needed improvements in public relations by focusing on the ineffectual and negative practices of the tobacco industry. Also, the study reviewed public and media perceptions of tobacco companies.

The research involved telephone inquiries, information from not-for-profit organizations, and a review of 108 publications using the headings, "Public Relations" and "Tobacco Industry."

Other research included an opinion survey administered to 100 undergraduate students at Rowan College of New Jersey.

Survey results found that a majority of students, smokers, and nonsmokers believed that public relations practice in the tobacco industry was "Unfavorable."

Conclusions indicated that unethical public relations practice in the tobacco industry reflected on the reputation of the company and the public relations practitioner. Other conclusions determined that public relations in the industry countered the standards adopted by the Public Relations Society of America.

Recommendations for public relations practitioners were to promote openness throughout the tobacco industry, eliminate tobacco advertisements appealing to teenagers, consider alternative uses for tobacco, and compensation to consumers harmed by tobacco.

Mini Abstract

Casper, Andrew M.

A Study of Public Relations Practice
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A literature review and student survey examined public relations misuse in the tobacco industry and needed improvements among practitioners.

Conclusions identified unethical public relations as reflecting the reputation of the organization and the practitioner.

Promoting industry openness and eliminating advertisements appealing to teenagers were included among the recommendations.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to improve the quality and reputation of public relations in private industry. If the art of public relations is to thrive into the twenty-first century, then it must be examined in terms of its negatives as well as its positives.

Such negatives are exemplified in the tobacco industry's campaign of misinformation and manipulation to consumers, public officials, the media, and the health and scientific community.

Therefore, the tobacco industry's misuse of public relations and how this has influenced public trust and social responsibility will be focal points of this study.

Need for Study

The author's study examines public relations misuse by delineating an idea referred to as "the double bottom line." This idea was conceived by Pat Jackson, publisher of *public relations reporter*.

Jackson refers to the "first bottom line" as an organization's pleasing its publics before doing business, while the "second bottom line" refers to the traditional philosophy of corporate success based on profits. He believes that when companies act in the public interest, they simultaneously act in their own interest.¹

¹ Anthony J. Fulginiti, ed., *Power-Packed PR: Ideas That Work, communication briefings* (Blackwood, NJ: Communication Publications and Resources, 1988) 4.

Accordingly, an important standard was established in 1954 by the Public Relations Society of American (PRSA) with respect to individual and corporate practice. This is known as the “Code of Professional Standards.”

PRSA’s philosophy is represented in the practice of “self-regulation” or “self-discipline” within the organization. Here are several motives behind self-regulation:

- (a) improve the public relations of a company or industry;
- (b) avert increased government controls;
- (c) improve the internal conditions within an industry;
- (d) serve the public interest more effectively;
- (e) increase individual or industry-wide self-respect.²

For more than forty years, tobacco companies such as RJ Reynolds, Philip Morris, and the American Tobacco Company have been scrutinized and condemned by public interest groups and health organizations as well as the medical and scientific community. Consequently, government agencies intervened and required tobacco companies to label the potential health hazards on cigarette packages.

In 1952, scientific evidence began linking cigarettes to lung cancer and other respiratory illnesses. Subsequently, tobacco companies were confronted by such issues as fire safety in residential communities due to careless smokers, environmental risks of passive smoke to nonsmokers, chewing tobacco’s association with oral cancer, and recent findings linking addiction to cigarette ingredients.

² Morton J. Simon, *Public Relations Law* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969), 672.

Tobacco public relations practitioners responded to anti-industry reports with their own campaigns. In 1994, the Philip Morris Company supported "Proposition 188," a California ballot initiative designed to repeal 200 stricter laws and replace them with a single statewide measure. Philip Morris funded the ballot initiative by contributing more than \$5 million to an organization called Californians for Statewide Smoking Restrictions.

In response to "Proposition 188," Paul Knepprath, an official with the American Lung Association, says, "Cloaking its intentions in anti-tobacco rhetoric is a very shrewd move, but deceptive and misleading."³

As noted by the former president of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T), Theodore N. Vail, "The only policy to govern publicity is that whatever is said or told should be absolutely correct, and that no material fact, even if unfavorable but bearing upon the subject, should be held back Attempted concealment of material facts cannot but be harmful in the end."⁴

History

Public relations misuse in the tobacco industry evolved as a tool of ignorance during the early 20th century, rather than a tool for deception. Public relations and tobacco easily shared a symbiotic relationship. There was little, if any, public knowledge at this time, documenting cigarette health concerns, particularly from the medical and

³ Eben Shapiro, "Campaign to Weaken Smoking Laws Stirs Fumes in California," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 24, 1994, B12 (E), col. 4.

⁴ Simon, *Public Relations Law*, 670.

scientific community.

Tobacco companies sought the services of public relations psychological marketing to attract women and children. They enlisted the support of Edward Bernays and his colleagues Ivy Lee and John Hill to pursue their objectives. All three pioneered techniques designed to benefit tobacco companies and are employed in today's vast public relations market.⁵

Edward Bernays, known as the "father of PR," was the primary figurehead in laying the foundations of contemporary public relations. Much of Bernays' approach was applied psychology derived from his nephew, Sigmund Freud.

Bernays initiated his first major public relations campaign with help from another psychoanalyst, A.A. Brill, and he recommended selling cigarettes to women as a symbol of liberation. Bernays proceeded to "hire beautiful fashion models to march in New York's prominent Easter parade, each waving a lit cigarette and wearing a banner proclaiming it a 'torch of liberty.'" Bernays made sure that publicity photos of his smoking models appeared worldwide. This earned public relations widespread credibility.⁶

⁵ John C. Stauber, "Smoke and Mirrors: How Tobacco and PR Grew Up Together," *PR Watch*, Newsletter 1, no. 4 (3rd Quarter 1994): 6.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

years. Tobacco executives, responding to a decline in sales and battling public rejection and government action, formed a Washington D.C.-based lobbying and public relations firm in 1958, known as the Tobacco Institute, supported by 11 cigarette companies.

In 1964, "Surgeon General Luther Terry confirmed what doctors and scientists had known for years: smoking was a primary cause of lung cancer and was strongly linked to emphysema and heart disease."⁸

The Surgeon General's report initiated the first direct warning to smokers inscribed on the side panels of cigarette packs: "Smoking may be hazardous to your health."

Several years later, the assault on tobacco escalated with a ban on cigarette TV advertising.

Despite efforts by government agencies and public health groups to control cigarette promotions, tobacco companies were unrelenting in their attempts to gain public support from women, teens, and minority groups.

For example, Philip Morris unveiled its public relations campaign on behalf of Virginia Slims. This product became a successful and primary sponsor of women's professional tennis in 1970. The Virginia Slims campaign has its roots in Bernays' subliminal message conveying a women's freedom to smoke and coining the slogan, "you've come a long way, baby."

Morris' campaign was effective prior to the TV advertising ban on cigarettes,

⁸ C. Kevin Swisher and Stephen D. Reese, "The Smoking and Health Issue in Newspapers: Influence of Regional Economies, The Tobacco Institute and News Objectivity," *Journalism Quarterly*, 69, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 987.

using civil rights to stir public emotions and attract consumers. They linked the women's suffrage movement of the early 20th century with the 1960s women's liberation movement.

For example, authentic looking footage, with music and narration, displayed women picketing during the suffrage era. Other scenes characterized the exclusive privilege of men and their smoking habits, while women were castigated for covertly participating in male-dominated activities.

The Virginia Slims Tennis Championship yielded little controversy until the late 1980s, when a Berkeley, California, public interest group called Non-Smokers' Rights became involved in the annual event. They referred to Virginia Slims tennis as "The most paradoxical marriage in sports, mixing young healthy athletes with cigarettes."⁹

Philip Morris' financial contribution to women's tennis has been so ingrained for the past twenty years that players like Gabriella Sabatini are saying, "I don't think of cigarettes when I think of Virginia Slims; rather, I associate Virginia Slims with tennis."¹⁰

In addition, tobacco companies have sought alliances with racial and ethnic minority groups by underwriting large cultural events, such as the Harlem Week festival in New York. Other examples include "giving the Congress of Racial Equality assistance to stage its Martin Luther King birthday celebration in New York; Philip Morris was only too happy to help foot the bill. RJ Reynolds and Philip Morris each gave more than \$200,000

⁹ Steven Cohen, "Smoke Screen," *Women's Sports and Fitness*, 13, no. 4 (May-June 1991): 54.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 55.

to the United Negro College Fund last year and an additional \$350,000 in 1987 to Black, Hispanic, and Women's Congressional Caucuses."¹¹

During African-American History month celebrations, cigarette companies target revenue-dependent, Black-owned radio stations and newspapers in sponsoring various events.

As a result, "major African-American magazines, including *Jet*, *Black Enterprise*, and *Modern Black Man*, and *Dollars and Sense*, have not published a single article alerting African-Americans to the risks of smoking."¹²

Yet, statistics compiled by the National Cancer Institute estimate, "Blacks develop esophageal cancer linked to cigarettes at a rate ten times higher than Whites."¹³

Despite anti-smoking advocates, tobacco executives have ignored issues of social responsibility and are unrelenting in their public relations operations. Tobacco executives have diverted attention from public health, instead, they have been promoting First Amendment rights of free speech by contributing Political Action Committee (PAC) money to Congressional elections, and funding special interest groups.

Consequently, each effective tobacco campaign triggers an equally effective counter response charging exploitation of public health and safety.

¹¹ Mark Miller, "A New Tobacco Alliance," *Newsweek*, February 13, 1989, 20.

¹² Courtland Milloy, "Selling of Black History," *The Washington Post*, January 29, 1991, C3.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Limitations

It was the author's intent to diversify the study by including tobacco industry spokespersons, as well as national public relations and marketing firms, in response to the thesis subject matter. However, consultation with academicians in the graduate public relations department at Rowan College of New Jersey determined that the sensitive nature of the subject and questions posed in the opinion survey would discourage sufficient or adequate response from those sources.

Therefore, the study was confined to examining public and media perceptions and attitudes of tobacco companies and advertising in conjunction with public relations practice.

Procedures

A thorough database search from the Rowan College Library in Glassboro, NJ, and the Philadelphia, PA, Public Library system uncovered 24 current periodicals, newspaper and journal articles delineating tobacco advertising and public relations practice, including public response to industry activities.

In addition, two relevant books were included among the library sources mentioned.

The author sought other source material from not-for-profit organizations concerned with tobacco marketing, advertising, and health matters. Telephone inquiries were conducted and resulted in information relevant to the thesis topic from the American

Lung Association, *communication briefings*, Public Relations Watch, and a national anti-smoking advocacy group, Citizens for a SmokeFree America. In addition, the director of Citizens for a SmokeFree America agreed to a brief telephone interview.

Finally, a public opinion survey was administered to 100 undergraduate students at Rowan College to determine their views on public relations practice.

All the information gathered assisted the author in interpreting cause-effect relationships among public relations practitioners in the tobacco industry, while suggesting measures to correct public relations activities.

CHAPTER II

RELEVANT LITERATURE

The author reviewed 108 books, newspapers, journals, and periodicals pertinent to public relations practice and the tobacco industry.

The research began with a computer database search at the Northeast Regional Public Library in Philadelphia, PA.

Sixty titles were listed using the library's InfoTrac general and business periodical index system. However, only 19 periodical, journal, and newspaper articles available from the microfilm and microfiche machines and the ProQuest computer data system were relevant to the thesis topic.

The second search was administered through Savitz Library at Rowan College in Glassboro, NJ. College librarian Cynthia Mullen assisted by conducting a dissertation abstract search; it provided no relevant information.

This was followed by a Scisearch database, listing 48 titles yielding five journal and periodical citations.

In addition, two relevant books were included among the library sources mentioned. A 1969 publication titled, *Public Relations Law*, by Morton J. Simon, was listed in the Savitz Library card catalog but was available from the Gloucester County College Library in Sewell, NJ through an inter-library loan. The second publication, *Effective Public Relations*, by Scott M. Cutlip, Allen H. Center, and Glen M. Broom, was a 1994 text available from the author's personal library.

Other sources were obtained through telephone inquiries, including fact sheet and brochure information from not-for-profit and public interest health organizations such as Public Relations Watch and the American Lung Association.

Public Relations Watch, which distributes a quarterly newsletter, provided two relevant articles on the tobacco industry appearing in the 3rd Quarter 1994 edition.

The American Lung Association provided two sources: a 1991 booklet titled, *Should Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Be Banned?*; and a 1990 *Federal Trade Commission Report to Congress* titled, "Pursuant to the Federal Cigarette Labeling and Advertising Act."

Also, a 1988 publication was received from the editors of *communication briefings*, *Powers Packed PR: Ideas That Work*, designed to improve the performance of public relations practitioners through communication and social responsibility.

Finally, assistance from graduate adviser Dr. Donald Bagin and the *communication briefings* organization led to a telephone interview on November 22, 1994, with the director of the not-for-profit organization, Citizens for a SmokeFree America, headquartered in Beverly Hills, CA. The organization's director, Patrick Reynolds, provided a telephone interview, conducted from the author's home in Maple Shade, NJ.

Most of the sources mentioned were timely, representing the mid-1980s through 1995.

Major points were reviewed and summarized from the relevant literature, with specific references included in this Chapter. This review is organized by subject heading.

Tobacco and Public Relations Practice: History

Richard W. Pollay, in "Propaganda, Puffing and the Public Interest," *Public Relations Review*, emphasized that public relations was instrumental in promoting cigarette smoking among women. Ultimately, this led to heavy advertising expenditures during the 1930s and 40s. According to Pollay, what contrasted that era's advertising and promotions with present day standards was the persistent emphasis on promotional health themes. For example, the makers of Camel cigarettes pushed the following slogan, "They Don't Get Your Wind," while Old Gold promised, "Not a Cough in a Carload." The Philip Morris Company referred to unnamed "eminent medical authorities" for their "less irritating" claim for an addictive described in bold red headlines as "an ounce of prevention." American Tobacco Company's brand name, Chesterfields, was advertised as the cigarette that "will not harm the nose and throat" because they were "much milder."¹

Pollay pointed to a medical convention in which one cigarette company advertised their product to physicians claiming that "more doctors smoke Camels than nay other cigarette" without disclosing specific data. He goes on to say, "Unbeknownst to the people who read the ads based on these claims was the fact that the interviewers had placed in the doctors' hotel rooms on their arrival, cartons of Camel cigarettes."²

Pollay noted that a 1952 *Reader's Digest* article titled "Cancer by the Carton" was published without any advertising revenue at risk and generated public fear of cancer.

¹ Richard W. Pollay, "Propaganda, Puffing, and the Public Interest," *Public Relations Review* 16, no. 4 (Fall 1990): 42.

² *Ibid.*

Medical studies linking cigarettes to cancer were being reported in the popular press, including such magazines as *Good Housekeeping* and *The New Yorker*. Later, these publications voluntarily refused to print cigarette advertisements.³

The medical community's study of tobacco and cancer led to a 1954 response by the tobacco industry. Pollay reported that the industry put together, "A Scientific Perspective," consisting of a compendium of quotations from 36 "distinguished cancer authorities." The 18 pages of excerpts quarreled with both "the alleged statistical association" and lab studies where mice painted with cigarette tars developed cancers.⁴

Pollay described these scientific studies as handsomely laid out, with bold italic marginal headlines featuring key phrases, such as "None of Evidence Conclusive," "Questions Role of Cigarette," "Unwarranted Conclusion," and "Tobacco Relatively Unimportant."⁵

By the late 1960s, Pollay's research finds the tobacco industry planting stories for mass distribution. The Federal Trade Commission intervened in 1968 by exposing the Tobacco Institute's (lobbying organization for the tobacco industry) involvement of placing stories in *True* and *The National Enquirer* publications. The front page headlines read, "Cigarette Cancer is Bunk." The nominal use of authors in these stories was actually attributed to an individual who was paid and supplied material through the Tobacco Institute. Hundreds of thousands of reprints were distributed to physicians, educators,

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, 47.

⁵ Ibid.

researchers, and public officials with an “editor’s message” attachment rather than disclosing the organization’s identity. Pollay refers to the Federal Trade Commission’s response, “These are not the acts of an industry either confident of its facts nor solicitous of its reputation.”⁶

In a 1990 *Federal Trade Commission Report* to congress on cigarette labeling and advertising, a consent order settled all charges against RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company for allegedly making false and misleading advertising claims regarding the health effects of smoking. According to the report, RJ Reynolds claimed in paid-for advertising that a study funded by the National Institutes of Health verified that smoking was not as harmful as commonly believed.⁷

The *Federal Trade Commission* report ordered Reynolds to cease from misrepresenting, “in any manner, directly or by implicating in any discussion of cigarette smoking and chronic or acute health effects, the results, design, purpose, or content of any scientific test or study explicitly referring to or concerning any association between cigarette smoking and chronic or acute health effects.”⁸

Tobacco Insiders

Family Perspectives

In an interview with this researcher, Patrick Reynolds, director of the not-for-

⁶ Ibid., 50.

⁷ Congress, Senate, *1990 Report of the Federal Trade Commission: Pursuant to the Federal Cigarette Labeling and Advertising Act*. 1992, 4-5. *Received from the American Lung Association of Southeastern, PA., West Chester Office.

⁸ Ibid.

profit Citizens for a SmokeFree America and heir to RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company, described his life's commitment to fighting the tobacco industry, partly because of family deaths from smoking and for his concern for teenage smoking. He pointed to his father, RJ Reynolds, Jr., who died from emphysema, when Patrick was 16, while he mourned the recent death of his half-brother, Joshua, from the same illness in June 1994.⁹

Reynolds says, "I'm battling the tobacco forces with positive public relations . . . in the public interest." Further, his devotion to the anti-smoking cause is supported by his voluntary divestiture of \$2.5 million worth of tobacco stock inherited from his grandmother, while half of his inheritance is spent on the anti-smoking crusade.¹⁰

In response to the tobacco industry's constitutional right to advertise, Reynolds replies, "While tobacco companies claim their right to advertise is protected under the Freedom of Speech Amendment, I believe that cigarette advertising is the biggest abuse of freedom of speech ever."¹¹

Management Perspectives

Jonathan Gregson in *Management Today*, "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly," stressed that most managers employed by what are characterized as "ugly companies" see their industries as no different from any other. He refers to a BAT (British American Tobacco) executive who said: "'You just get on with it.' Tobacco company managers

⁹ Patrick Reynolds, director of Citizens for a SmokeFree America, interview by Andrew M. Casper, Telephone interview, Maple Shade, NJ, November 22, 1994.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

soon learn to cope with the social situation in which some fervent anti-smoker demands, 'How can you?'"¹²

Gregson wrote that the tobacco company managers focus on their "state-of-the-art production technologies and equally sophisticated distribution and marketing operation – not on the intrinsic nature of the product."¹³

Gregson summarized by saying, "The tobacco companies have seemed reconciled to making the best of a poor job, to accepting their ugly status and milking the cash cow for all they are worth until it dries up, if it ever does."¹⁴

Internal Documents

In a *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* article, "The Brown and Williamson Documents: Where do we go from here?" the editors discussed the Brown and Williamson Tobacco Company's internal documents, disclosed from an unknown source.

They reported that the documents revealed the following:

- "that research conducted by tobacco companies into the deleterious health effects of tobacco was often more advanced and sophisticated than studies by the medical community";
- "that executives at Brown and Williamson knew early on that tobacco use was

¹² Jonathan Gregson, "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly," *Management Today*, September 1994, 38.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 42.

harmful and that nicotine was addictive and debated whether to make the research public”;

- “that the industry decided to conceal the truth from the public”;
- “that the industry hid their research from the courts by sending the data through their legal departments, their lawyers asserting that the results were immune to disclosure in litigation because they were the privileged product of the lawyer-client relationship.”¹⁵

The JAMA editors stressed that “these documents show how the industry has managed to spread confusion by suppressing, manipulating, and distorting the scientific record.”¹⁶

Promotions and Advertising

Targeting Audiences

In the American Lung Association’s booklet, *Should Tobacco Advertising and Promotions Be Banned?*, they respond the tobacco company sponsorship of promotional activities by emphasizing that “Sponsorship conveys an image of corporate ‘good citizenship’ and generosity, and connects tobacco products, which are toxic and addictive, with exciting and healthy sports events and other popular activities. Unfortunately, members of under-funded cultural organizations eagerly seek funds from tobacco

¹⁵ Editorial, “The Brown and Williamson Documents: Where do we go from here?” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 274, no. 3 (July 19, 1994): 256.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

companies and become dependent on them.”¹⁷

Patrick Reynolds, director of Citizens for a SmokeFree America, points out that, “Tobacco ads, which associate smoking with health, vitality, sports, youth, and friendship, are in fact the greatest lie ever perpetrated on the American public.”¹⁸

In Mark Miller’s *Newsweek* article, “A New Tobacco Alliance: The smoking industry looks to Blacks for support,” *Newsweek*, he reported that the tobacco industry chose a different method of battling anti-smoking advocates. They diverted attention from statistical reports showing 390,000 smoking-related deaths in 1985 and focused on smoking restrictions discriminating against minorities and violating civil liberties.”¹⁹

Courtland Malloy, in the *Washington Post* story, “Selling of Black History,” identifies the advertising used by the tobacco industry during the Black History Month celebration. The advertisement is presented in the following manner: “Black History Month is upon us, and RJ Reynolds once again salutes and supports African-Americans in their quest for a brighter future.”²⁰

Malloy wrote, “Targeting of Black consumers by cigarette and liquor manufacturers has become ‘Scud-like’ in its crudity, with products that are the leading killers of people being associated with great men such as the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.,

¹⁷ American Lung Association booklet: *Should Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Be Banned?* (New York: American Lung Association, 1991), 6.

¹⁸ Reynolds, interview by Andrew M. Casper.

¹⁹ Mark Miller, “A New Tobacco Alliance: The smoking industry looks to Blacks for support,” *Newsweek*, February 13, 1989, 20.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Booker T. Washington, Malcolm X, and Frederick Douglas.”²¹

Steven Cohen, in *The Women's Sports and Fitness* article, “Smokescreen: Virginia Slims is becoming the butt of public opinion for its connection to women’s tennis,” examined critics who claim that cigarette companies have managed to maneuver around the 1971 ban on TV advertising. Cohen cites Dr. Alan Blum, founder of Doctors Ought to Care, by offering this opinion: “Sports advertising and sports promotion are an effort to create a social acceptance for cigarettes, particularly with kids.”²²

Further, Cohen quotes Dr. Blum, saying, “In 1991, 20 years after the ban on television advertising, you have tobacco companies juxtaposing ads with the athletes. He said, we’ve given the industry a chance to say, ‘hey, we’re not a cigarette company; we’re a tennis tournament.’”²³

Samuel Broder, MD, in a *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* editorial, “Cigarette Advertising and Corporate Responsibility,” stated his belief that the new generation of cartoon advertisements promoting Camel and Kool cigarettes would only serve to recruit millions of adolescents to the smoking ranks. The December 11, 1991 issue of JAMA supported Broder’s position, reporting three independent studies linking

²¹ Courtland Malloy, “Selling of Black History,” *The Washington Post*, January 29, 1991, C3.

²² Steven Cohen, “Smokescreen: Virginia Slims is becoming the butt of public opinion for its connection to women’s tennis,” *Women's Sports and Fitness*, May-June 1991, 58.

²³ *Ibid.*, 59.

the cartoon advertisement with the use of Camel cigarettes.²⁴

Broder explained, "It is clear that the industry is intent on continuing their youth-oriented marketing campaigns, while simultaneously attacking the validity of any study that purports to show a relationship between marketing practice and product use."²⁵

Jeffrey W. McKenna, MS, and Kymber N. Williams, MA, in *Public Health Reports* article, "Crafting Effective Tobacco Counteradvertisements," evaluated focus group findings among teenagers. The study reported the effectiveness of nine different concepts and messages about smoking on the basis of three measures: concepts that stand out, concepts that they liked and concepts that they believed."²⁶

McKenna and Williams determined from the study that no single concept was a clear favorite among the focus groups. However, the statements, "Cigarettes are a drug" and "Smoking makes everything more difficult" were rated most effective overall and viewed as nonjudgmental and true. The concept, "Companies that make, sell, and advertise cigarettes are exploiting you," was rated highly by the teenagers because they felt "it is true and makes you think."²⁷

John R. Engen in the *World Trade* article, "Coughing Fits," reported that cigarette sales declined sharply at home while Philip Morris, RJ Reynolds, and other tobacco

²⁴ Samuel Broder, MD, "Cigarette Advertising and Corporate Responsibility," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 268, no. 6, (August 12, 1992): 782.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 783.

²⁶ Jeffrey W. McKenna, MS, and Kymber N. Williams, MA, "Creating Effective Tobacco Counteradvertisements: Lessons From a Failed Campaign Directed at Teenagers," *Public Health Reports*, 1993, 108, supp. 1 (1993): 87.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

companies were investing heavily in plants and sophisticated promotions to expand their sales in the Far East.²⁸

Engen continues, “American tobacco companies give away lighters, T-shirts, and bags emblazoned with brand logos in Taipei discos. They sponsor rock concerts in Hong Kong and sporting events in the Philippines. These and other promotions appear aimed squarely at teens.”²⁹

Countering Opposition

Public Disclosure and the Media

Stuart Elliot wrote in *The New York Times* article, “Cigarette Companies Avoid Aggressive Publicity Efforts,” that Philip Morris, RJ Reynolds, and the American tobacco companies were “lessening high-profile, expensive publicity and public relations programs, once key elements of introducing brands or advertising campaigns for extensive brands.”³⁰

Elliot refers to Maura Payne, director of external communications for RJ Reynolds, commenting, “The anti-smoking forces have so supercharged the environment, we find there’s no positive benefit from us seeking publicity.”³¹

Elliot’s article mentioned Emanuel Goldman, spokesperson for Paine Webber, Inc.,

²⁸ John R. Engen, “Coughing Fits, Why is Washington Subsidizing Tobacco Exports to Asia at the Same Time It’s Cracking Down on Smoking at Home?” *World Trade*, November 1994, 50.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Stuart Elliot, “Cigarette Companies Avoid Aggressive Publicity Efforts,” *The New York Times*, June 3, 1991, C9(N) and D9(L).

³¹ *Ibid.*

who suggested, "Tobacco companies that benefit from 'pre-launch' publicity will conversely be subjected to public attacks by their opponents."³²

C. Kevin Swisher and Stephen D. Reese, in "The Smoking and Health Issue in Newspapers," *Journalism Quarterly*, wrote that the Tobacco Institute has proposed to foster "public understanding of the smoking and health controversy." They reported that the Tobacco Institute went so far as to write hostile letters to newspapers that failed to contact them for a rebuttal on smoking stories.³³

Swisher and Reese discussed the appointment of Dr. David Burns, a leading authority on passive smoke and a vocal critic of cigarettes, to a special 16-member panel of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) investigating 38,000 lung cancer deaths resulting from involuntary cigarette smoke. Then-EPA administrator, William Reilly at the time, received protest letters from the Tobacco Institute in August 1990 concerning Burns' involvement and asking that he be removed from the panel. Burns was later removed following action from Virginia Congressman Thomas Bliley whose district is the largest private employer for Philip Morris Tobacco.³⁴

Swisher and Reese pointed out that Burns publicized his removal from the panel, resulting in his reappointment to the agency and casting the Tobacco Institute in a reactive role. Swisher and Reese explained, "The Institute had to defend themselves against

³² Ibid.

³³ C. Kevin Swisher and Stephen D. Reese, "The Smoking and Health Issue in Newspapers: Influence of Regional Economies, the Tobacco Institute and News Objectivity," *Journalism Quarterly* 69, 4 (Winter 1992): 991.

³⁴ Ibid., 991-992.

accusations of undue influence," and they maintained that "the coverage of the story created more controversy for the industry and left it susceptible to further scrutiny."³⁵

Bob Herbert, in *The New York Times* article, "Avoiding the Obvious on Tobacco," reported that "You cannot get a yes or no answer from the tobacco industry on whether smoking has caused even one case of cancer. No proof, the spokespeople say. But, then they hedge. Because the evidence is tremendous, and because the total number of dead and dying is so enormous and especially because the liability potential is so great, the tobacco industry now officially acknowledges that smokers are risking their lives every time they light up."³⁶

Herbert offered remarks from Thomas Lauria, a spokesperson for the Tobacco Institute, saying, "Studies have provided evidence that link cigarette smoking as a risk factor for emphysema, heart disease, and lung cancer, among other health problems."³⁷

Michael Janofsky, in *The New York Times* article, "Tobacco Industry Tries A New Pitch: Openness," discussed the disclosure of tobacco's ingredients. He referred to comments by Matthew Myers, a Washington lawyer representing a coalition of health groups, "The tobacco industry only does what it has to do. They have been forced to take a number of steps that they would not have taken months ago. The only reason they identified the secret ingredients is that they realized the cost of not disclosing them was

³⁵ Ibid., 992.

³⁶ Bob Herbert, "Avoiding the Obvious on Tobacco," *The New York Times*, March 6, 1994, sec. 4, E15(N) and E15(L), col. 2.

³⁷ Ibid.

more significant than the benefits of secrecy.”³⁸

Janofsky explained that the tobacco industry’s response began after February 25, 1994, when Food and Drug Administration Commissioner David A. Kessler announced “having evidence that cigarette makers could manipulate the levels of nicotine as a way to keep smokers addicted.”³⁹

Health, Safety and the Environment

Elliott Marshall, in the *Science* article, “Tobacco Science Wars,” focused on two outspoken scientists, James Repace of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Staton A. Glantz of the University of California at San Francisco, who accused the tobacco industry of grossly misusing scientific data. Repace and Glantz are quoted as saying, “The propaganda war has grown ugly, and in order to feed it, the industry has used the work of consultants to denigrate sound research and confuse the public.”⁴⁰

Marshall referred to information put forth by Glantz, in which he quotes from Brown and Williamson Tobacco documents subpoenaed by the Federal Trade Commission in 1969. The documents established a public relations strategy covered by the industry and expressed the following: “Doubt is our product since it is the best means of competing with the ‘body of fact’ that exists in the mind of the general public. It is also the means of establishing a controversy. If we are successful at establishing a controversy at the public

³⁸ Michael Janofsky, “Tobacco Industry Tries A New Pitch: Openness,” *The New York Times*, April 20, 1994, D17 and D19(L).

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Eliot Marshall, “Tobacco Science Wars,” *Science* 236, April 1987, 250.

level, then there is an opportunity to put across the real facts about smoking and health.⁴¹

An example of the tobacco industry's creating doubt about other people's research, according to Glantz, was to run scientific meetings in which established researchers and tobacco industry consultants were invited as speakers. Glantz indicated that at a seminar held at Georgetown University, concerning the science of environmental smoke, pharmacologist and tobacco industry consultant, Sorell Schwartz, organized the event with the help of tobacco companies, but failed to inform the other participants of the sponsors and funders. Glantz pointed to critics who viewed the event as a means to "undermine" the upcoming scientific reports. As one person expressed at the event, "I was worried about seeing my name in a RJ Reynolds ad, printed under a summary written by an industry consultant."⁴²

Myron Levin, the *The Nation* article, "Tobacco Smokescreen, Fighting Fire with PR," wrote that the tobacco industry was determined to prevent regulations of their products and initiated a sophisticated campaign to defuse the issue. Levin reported that the industry quietly began distributing grants and contracts to fire departments and fire safety organizations, hoping to buy the favor of those whose credibility on the subject would be unquestioned.⁴³

According to Levin, the tobacco industry was able to organize twenty state and national fire-prevention groups to defeat a tough bill dealing with cigarette fires. Instead,

⁴¹ Ibid., 251.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Myron Levin, "Tobacco Smokescreen, Fighting Fire with PR," *The Nation*, July 10, 1989, 52.

the fire-prevention groups endorsed weak legislation supported by the industry. Levin points out that the tobacco industry was so successful “that some fire groups had no idea that the misleadingly named ‘Fire Safe Cigarette Implementation Act’ was in fact drafted by the tobacco industry in order to deny passage of legislation.”⁴⁴

In the *Business and Society Review* article, “How the Building Doctor Inhales Tobacco Money,” Myron Levin described how Gray Robertson, an indoor air quality expert, was recruited on behalf of the tobacco industry to fight against smoking bans. Levin pointed out that Robertson received millions of dollars from the industry in the form of consulting fees, travel expenses, and public relations support that helped his small firm achieve a global presence in the field.⁴⁵

Levin said, “Robertson’s veneer of independence, together with his view that poor ventilation, not individual contaminants like tobacco smoke, was the main cause of indoor pollution made him a valuable ally against the tide of anti-smoking legislation.”⁴⁶

In the *Consumer Reports* article, “Secondhand Smoke: It is a Hazard?”, the editors reviewed the tobacco industry’s response to scientific studies of “secondhand smoke” or passive smoke. They maintained that they are using “scientific uncertainty and a lot of public relations to suggest there is still a serious debate about the health hazards of

⁴⁴ Ibid., 53.

⁴⁵ Myron Levin, “How the Building Doctor Inhales Tobacco Money,” *Business and Society Review* (Fall 1993): 44.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

breathing smoke from other people's cigarettes."⁴⁷

In addition, the editors of *Consumer Reports* emphasize, "The industry's public-relations firms are creating bogus 'grassroots' organizations as fronts for lobbying against smoking restrictions."⁴⁸

Political and Legal Battles

The director of Citizens for a SmokeFree America, Patrick Reynolds, described a Philip Morris Tobacco company political and advertising campaign known as the "Bill of Rights Tour." Its purpose, according to Reynolds, was, "to invite thousands of school children to come to visit the Bill of Rights in the nation's capital, and be able to 'unconsciously' associate this major constitutional document with the Philip Morris logo alongside of it, representing truth, justice, and freedom."⁴⁹

Reynolds also said, "This campaign is an attempt to distract out attention from how badly the tobacco industry is abusing their right to freedom of speech through advertising."⁵⁰

Eben Shapiro, in *The Wall Street Journal* article, "Philip Morris May Be Creating An Office of Counterintelligence," wrote that the company set up a toll-free number and urged smokers to call their elected officials to oppose President Clinton's initiative to raise

⁴⁷ Editors, "Secondhand Smoke: It is a Hazard?" *Consumer Reports*, 10, January 1995, 27.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁴⁹ Reynolds, interview with Andrew M. Casper.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

cigarette taxes as part of his health care proposal. However, according to Shapiro, the calls delivered to the White House were not a spontaneous outcry of opposition. Philip Morris contacted many of its millions of smokers stored in its databases for this particular issue and connected them directly to Washington.⁵¹

John Stauber, in the *PR Watch Newsletter* article, "Smokers' Hacks: The Tobacco Lobby's PR Front Groups," comments, "That one way the cigarette industry intends to keep winning is by escalating to unprecedented levels its use of public relations front groups, such as the National Smokers Alliance (NSA), operated by the Burson-Marsteller public relations firm and funded through the Philip Morris Company."⁵²

Stauber points out that "Burson-Marsteller's propagandists have coined a clever play on words questioning the patriotism of 'anti-Americans', and the NSA's newsletter advises, if 'anti-America' is pushing a discriminatory ban into your workplace, speak up, and check the laws in your state with regard to the protection of individual rights."⁵³

Stauber stresses, "The tobacco industry's goal is not to win good PR, but to avoid losing political and legal battles."⁵⁴

Eben Shapiro wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* article, "Campaign to Weaken Smoking Laws Stirs Fumes in California," that a campaign called "Proposition 188"

⁵¹ Eben Shapiro, "Philip Morris May Be Creating An Office of Counterintelligence," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 25, 1993, B1(E).

⁵² John Stauber, "Smokers' Hacks: The Tobacco Lobby's PR Front Groups," *PR Watch Newsletter 1, no. 4* (3rd Quarter 1994): 2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

underwritten by Philip Morris tobacco, was designed to weaken smoking regulations and to defeat proposed tobacco laws in the state. Shapiro quoted Robin Hobart, associate director of *Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights*: "If the tobacco industry feels they can shut us down here, they will put the rest of the nation back ten years."⁵⁵

Hobart remarks in the article that, "Proposition 188" would repeal more than 200 stricter laws and replace them with a single statewide measure; however, the supporters are portraying the measure as though it contained tough restrictions."⁵⁶

Patrick Reynolds responded to "Proposition 188" in an interview by saying, "Their public relations tactics were to avoid public relations, . . . don't be available for media interviews, so the media would be less likely to schedule radio debates."⁵⁷

Public Relations and Industry Credibility

Ethics and Social Responsibility

In Morton J. Simon's book, *Public Relations Law*, he recommended, "clarification of the company's ethical threshold in public relations as one of the major responsibilities of top management If this is left unspecified, management is failing to come to grips with the basic question of the company's role in society."⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Eben Shapiro, "Campaign to Weaken Smoking Laws Stirs Fumes in California," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 24, 1994, B12(E), col. 4.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Reynolds, interview by Andrew M. Casper.

⁵⁸ Morton J. Simon, *Public Relations Law* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969), 675.

Simon specifies the Code of Professional Standards for the practice of public relations as adopted by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and includes the following clauses:

1. A member shall conduct his professional life in accord with the public welfare.
2. A member has the affirmative duty of adhering to generally accepted standards of accuracy, truth, and good taste.
3. A member has the affirmative duty of adhering to generally accepted standards of accuracy, truth and good taste.
6. A member shall not engage in any practice which tends to corrupt the integrity of channels of public communication.
7. A member shall not intentionally disseminate false or misleading information and is obligated to use ordinary care to avoid dissemination of false or misleading information.
15. A member shall, as soon as possible, sever his relations with any organization when he or she knows or should know that his continued employment would require him to conduct himself contrary to the principles of this Code.⁵⁹

Dennis Weiser, in the *Journal of Business Ethics* article, "Two Concepts of Communication as Criteria for Collective Responsibility," says, "We need to take a hard look not just as the internal decision structure of corporations but at the relationship of particular decisions to corporate identity. If scandal and disaster seem to demand full accounting in the form of inquiry or investigation, then it is at least plausible to think that

⁵⁹ Ibid., 678-679.

such events might be largely avoided by requiring an appropriate level of disclosure as a standard that we continuously observe.”⁶⁰

Michael Winkelman, in the *Public Relations Journal* article, “Soul Searching,” discusses the ethics crisis for public relations professionals. Winkelman cites W. Michael Hoffman, director of the Center for Business Ethics at Bentley College, who focuses on ethics in two ways: “In terms of the ethics of the profession itself and in terms of how maintaining ethical practices reflects on the reputations of the organizations for which public relations professionals work.”⁶¹

Hoffman suggests, “Ethics remains good for business, and to a large extent the tasks involved, the challenges and responsibilities for communicating codes to employees and ethical practices to publics rests with public relations practitioners.”⁶²

Public Relations Practice

J. Richard Finlay, in the *Business Quarterly* article, “De-Coding the Corporate Credibility,” believes that “Too much of the thrust of corporate public relations has been to mollify and deflect criticism rather than ameliorating legitimate factors of public discontent.” He continues by saying, “Too much public relations has been in the form of one-sided speeches and press releases rather than adequate analysis of public concern and

⁶⁰ Dennis Weiser, “Two Concepts of Communication as Criteria for Collective Responsibility,” *Journal of Business Ethics*, 7 (October 1988), 736.

⁶¹ Michael Winkelman, “Soul Searching,” *Public Relations Journal*, October 1987, 32.

⁶² *Ibid.*

opinions.”⁶³

Hal D. Steward, in the *Public Relations Quarterly* article, “Is Public Relations the Art of Deception for Fun and Profit?” suggests, “Public Relations can develop public acceptance for a good product or cause, but it can’t help a bad one.”⁶⁴

Steward cites Allen Sommers, a public relations counsel of Malvern, PA, said, “While it is our job to present a client in the best light to the press and the public, the real PR professional presents the facts and the truth at all events.”⁶⁵

Sommers also points out, “Anything that hurts the corporation can readily be blamed on one or two individuals, who can be punished by dismissal. But, acts by which the corporation itself does harm are seldom blamed on anyone in particular. The PR professional has to become the maverick who pumps a conscience into the system.”⁶⁶

In the publication, *Power-Packed PR: Ideas That Work*, Don Gallagher, formerly research director for *communication briefings*, explains, “Public Relations doesn’t create an image. It relates an image that already exists. The true image will come out. And when it does, the created image fades along with the credibility of the image creators.”⁶⁷

Also, in *Power-Packed PR*, the New Jersey School Boards Association offers a

⁶³ J. Richard Finlay, “De-coding the Corporate Credibility Dilemma,” *Business Quarterly*, 44, no. 2 (Summer 1979): 48.

⁶⁴ Hal D. Steward, “Is Public Relations the Art of Deception for Fun and Profit.” *Public Relations Quarterly*, Spring 1987, 10.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶⁷ Anthony J. Fulginiti, ed., *Power-Packed-PR: Ideas That Work, communication briefings*, (Blackwood, NJ: Communication Publications and Resources, 1988), 5.

suggestion for what's good public relations by explaining, "Public Relations is not a way to cover up a poor program or to convince the public that such a program is good. Neither is it the advantageous use of half truths. Public Relations must be factual, truthful and complete; it must face problems with integrity, admit weaknesses when confronted with them and explain what is being done to overcome them."⁶⁸

Scott M. Cutlip, Allen H. Center, and Glen M. Broom in *Effective Public Relations*, had this to say regarding public relations practitioners: "Events planned to promote a cause in the public interest do have a legitimate place in public relations."⁶⁹

Cutlip, Center, and Broom summarize by saying, "To qualify as a profession, practitioners—both individually and collectively—must operate as moral agents in society."⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Scott M. Cutlip, Allen H. Center and Glen M. Broom, *Effective Public Relations*, 7th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1994), 134.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

Database searches were conducted to determine available information on the tobacco industry and its relationship with public relations practice. Also, searches included subject matter concerning the tobacco industry's advertising and marketing techniques, historical background and issues pertaining to the industry's impact on public health and safety.

The first computer search was undertaken at the Northeast Regional Public Library in Philadelphia, PA. The library's Infotrac system was operated, using the general periodical index and business index.

Some 60 titles were listed from the headings, "Tobacco" and sub-headings, "Public Relations," on the InfoTrac's printout. However, through library catalogue and other in-house searches, only 19 periodicals, journals, and newspapers were available from the microfilm and microfiche machines, the ProQuest computer data system (compiled on-line a specific list of journal articles), as well as current publications on display in the library's reading room were relevant to the thesis topic.

The 19 articles researched pertained to issues affecting public relations practice in the tobacco industry and public response to the industry's activities. These sources were timely representing the mid 1980s through 1995.

The second search was conducted through Savitz Library at Rowan College in Glassboro, NJ. College librarian Cynthia Mullen assisted by conducting a dissertation abstract search; it provided no relevant information.

This was followed by a Scisearch database, listing additional sub-headings under "Public Relations," including "Advertising and Marketing," "Corporate Responsibility," "Cigarettes," and "Tobacco Industry."

A computerized print-out listed 48 titles yielding five journal citations relevant to the thesis subject. These articles covered the years 1979 through 1990 inclusive.

In addition, two relevant books were included among the library sources mentioned. A 1969 publication titled, *Public Relations Law* was listed in the Savitz Library card catalogue at Rowan College of NJ, but was available through an inter-library loan from the Gloucester County College Library in Sewell, NJ. The second publication, *Effective Public Relations*, was a 1994 text available from the author's personal library.

Other sources were obtained through telephone inquiries, including fact sheets, newsletters, and brochure information from not-for-profit and public interest organizations such as Public Relations Watch and the American Lung Association. The American Lung Association provided a booklet on tobacco advertising and promotions and a copy of a Federal Trade Commission report on tobacco advertising and labeling.

Also, a publication was received from the editors of *communication briefings*, *Power-Packed PR: Ideas That Work*, designed to improve the performance of public relations practitioners through communication and social responsibility.

Library and telephone inquiry research yielded thirty articles. Each article was reviewed and summarized with specific references included in Chapter II.

Review of all the literature and not-for-profit information allowed the author to determine how the media, the general public, and public interest groups gauge the tobacco

industry's public relations practice through its advertising, marketing, and lobbying efforts.

In consultation with graduate adviser, Dr. Ronald Bagin, and after a review of available research, a public opinion survey was developed to determine how undergraduate students perceive and define the practice of public relations.

The author administered the confidential survey on the campus to 100 undergraduate students at Rowan College of New Jersey, selecting four different classes, excluding public relations or communications. Those classes were Modern Art, Introduction to Macro Economics, American Government, and Sociology—Methods and Statistics.

The survey was comprised of nine questions involving demographic information (age, sex, smoker vs nonsmoker, and undergraduate year), open and close-ended questions, and a semantic differential rating scale.

The results of the survey were compiled, correlated, and presented in Chapter IV.

Finally, assistance from graduate adviser, Dr. Donald Bagin, and the *communication briefings* organization led to a scheduled telephone interview with the director of the not-for-profit organization, Citizens for a SmokeFree America. The organization's director, Patrick Reynolds, provided a telephone interview.

Reynolds presented his perspectives on public relations and how it has been used by the tobacco industry to deceive and deflect public opinion. The results of this interview were presented in Chapter II.

Overall, data results were analyzed, conclusions were drawn, and recommendations were presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

SURVEY RESULTS

The researcher distributed the confidential survey to 100 undergraduate students at Rowan College of New Jersey during the week of October 16, 1994. These students represented the sample population required by the thesis adviser.

Four different classes were selected for the survey. No classes focused on public relations or communications. Public relations and communication classes were excluded to avoid biased results from the survey analysis. The following classes were used: Modern Art, Introduction to Macro Economics, American Government, and Sociology–Methods and Statistics.

Professors Wasserman, Hitchner, Caswell, and Tannenbaum permitted 15 to 20 minutes of class time for administering and filling out the surveys.

The survey was comprised of nine questions involving demographic information (age, sex, smoker vs. nonsmoker, and undergraduate year), open and close-ended questions, and a semantic differential rating scale.

Listed below are the survey findings.

Major Findings

Question #1

What is your major field of study at Rowan College?

School of Liberal Arts & Sciences %	School of Education %	School of Business Administration %	School of Fine and Performing Arts %
54	19	19	8

Question #2

What is your current year in the undergraduate program?

Senior %	Junior %	Sophomore %	Freshman %
36	36	20	8

Question #3

How familiar are you with public relations practice, whether in organizations, companies, or educational institutions?

Somewhat Familiar %	Familiar %	Unfamiliar %	Very Familiar %
39	32	26	*

Question #3 Part I

If you answered Somewhat Familiar, Familiar, or Very Familiar, briefly explain where you have heard public relations used and what it means.

More than 71 percent of the respondents answered that they were familiar with public relations when referred to in the news media or through their membership affiliations with various organizations.

The respondents described public relations as a means of disseminating information to external publics. They referred to the public information model (one-way communication) used by businesses and government agencies.

Question #3 Part II

If you answered unfamiliar, briefly explain what it means.

A majority of these respondents described public relations as the public information model of a one-way communication.

Question #4

When public relations is referred to in the media (television, radio, or print) as it relates to government, private industry, or organizations, how do you think it has generally been described as being:

*Indicates less than 5%

Somewhat Honest %	Dishonest %	Honest %	Very Honest %
69	15	15	*

Question #5

If you were public relations director for the food and beverage industry, respond to the following categories based on the degree of importance from a public relations view.

*Indicates less than 5%

	Very Important %	Important %	Somewhat Important %	Less Important %	Not Important %
Quality of products sold to customers	75	21	*	*	0
How customers feel about the company	65	31	*	0	0
Employee morale	38	37	15	10	0
Overall company/ management interests	31	47	16	6	0
Crisis management and prevention	29	47	18	5	0

Question #6

How do you perceive the practice of public relations in the tobacco industry?

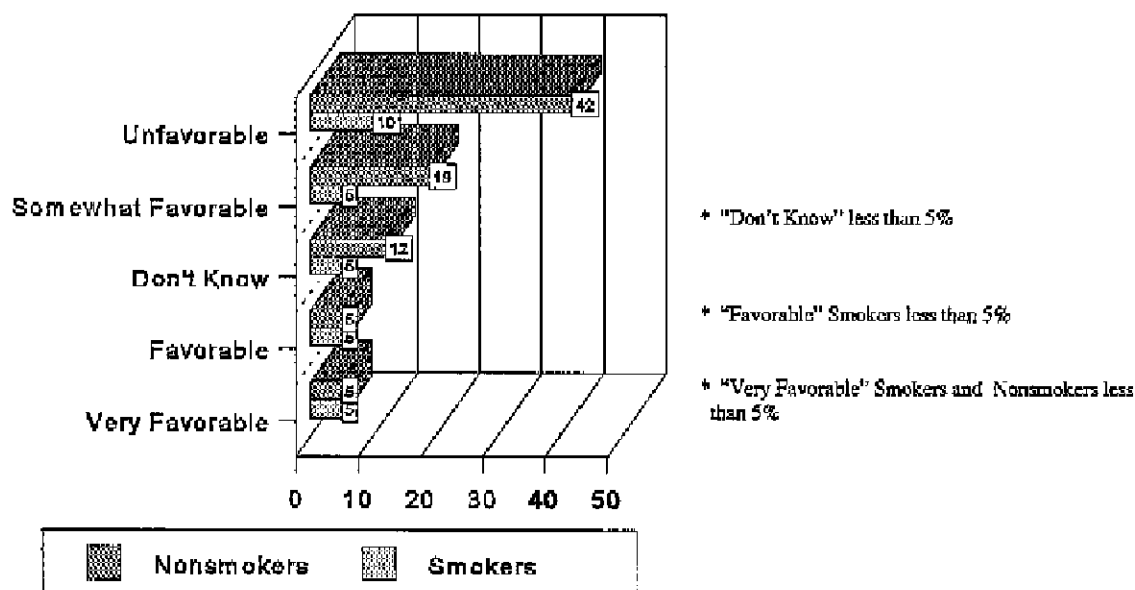
*Indicates less than 5%

Unfavorably %	Somewhat Favorably %	Don't Know %	Favorably %	Very Favorably %
52	24	12	10	*

Explanation of Responses to Question #6

The majority of respondents perceived public relations practice in the tobacco industry as deceptive to consumers because the industry refused to disclose the harmful ingredients in the product. Also, respondents believed that the tobacco industry's strategy of television and billboard advertising is deceptive because of cartoon figures used to attract teenagers.

Respondents' Perception of Public Relations Practice in the Tobacco Industry Smokers vs. Nonsmokers



Question #7

Are you a smoker?

No %	Yes %
79	21

If you answered Yes, explain what attracted you to smoking.

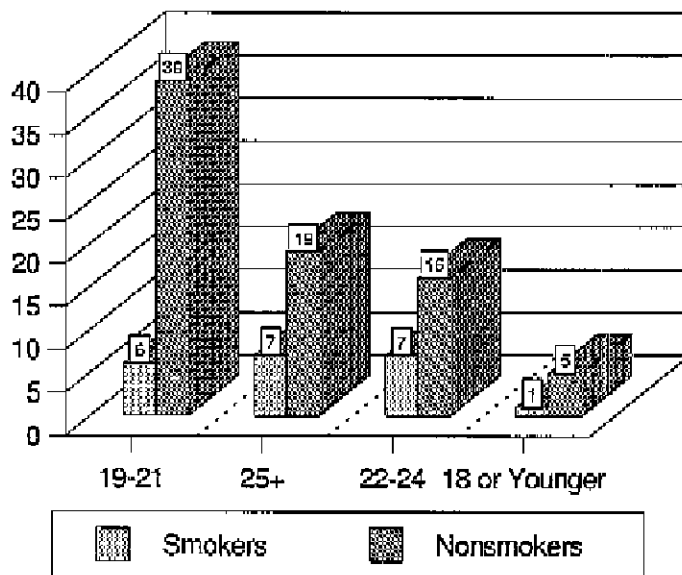
A majority of respondents believed it was a combination of advertising and peer pressure.

Question #8

What is your age?

Age	%
19-21	38
25+	26
22-24	23
18 or younger	6

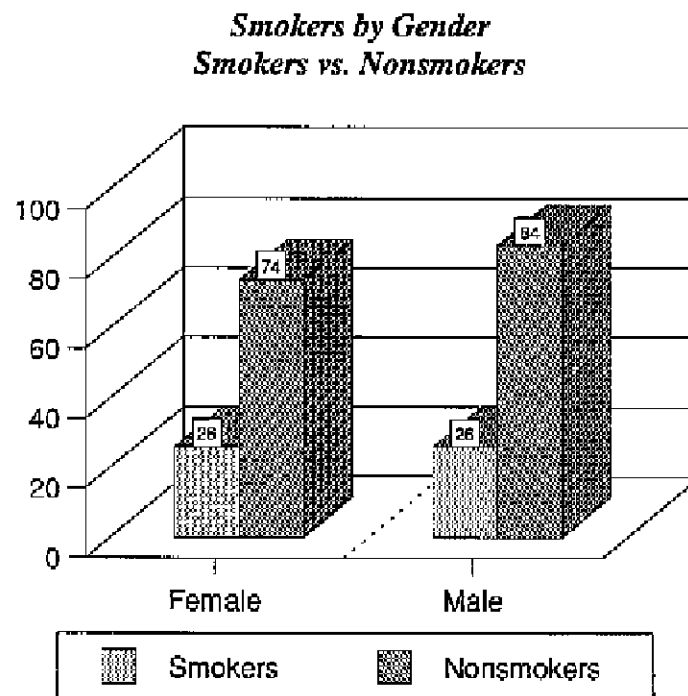
*Smokers by Age
Smokers vs. Nonsmokers*



Question #9

What is your sex?

Female	Male
%	%
50	50



Conclusions and recommendations based upon the results listed above are included in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The author's study examined public and media perceptions and attitudes of tobacco companies and advertising relevant to public relations practice. This was accomplished through a literature search consisting of 108 publications and an opinion survey of 100 undergraduate students.

The literature search by means of computer indexing, telephone inquiries, and general library assistance resulted in 30 published articles and one telephone interview.

One hundred undergraduate students were surveyed on their opinions of public relations practice and issues relevant to the tobacco industry. The survey was comprised of nine questions focusing on demographic information, open and close-ended questions, and a semantic differential rating scale. This survey was conducted during a one-week period at Rowan College of New Jersey.

Conclusions

The author's research, as confirmed by journalists, editorial writers, public health organizations and advocates, and a student opinion survey, illustrated a blatant disregard for ethical public relations practice and advertising by the tobacco industry.

Consequently, the tobacco industry's media, public affairs, and advertising campaigns represented the very antithesis of standards for professional and public relations conduct adopted by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA).

The industry's denial of tobacco's health risks, failure to cooperate with medical and scientific authorities, and resistance to self-regulation exacerbated public, private, and governmental scrutiny.

As described by the author's research, tobacco companies spent most of their time exercising damage control, reacting to or deflecting critical charges from opponents, and avoiding direct questions from the news media, rather than accepting responsibility for their actions.

Therefore, the tobacco industry's public relations activities had precipitated government health warning labels on cigarette packages, restrictions on advertising, and smoke-free environments for business, industry, and travel service. Further, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is currently considering a ban on cigarettes as an addictive drug.

Richard W. Pollay's article, "Propaganda, Puffing and the Public Interest," demonstrated the deceptive public relations practices initiated by tobacco industry officials in the early 1950s when confronted with scientific studies and health warnings associated with cigarette smoking.

The industry sought public respectability for smoking and attempted to create a buffer between itself and its adversaries. Tobacco companies legitimized their cause by exploiting and financially supporting scientists, educators, public officials, and organizations who would negate anti-smoking claims, without disclosing specific data on cigarettes and public health concerns regarding the product.

Philip Morris, RJ Reynolds, and other companies pursued their efforts through the

expertise of the Tobacco Institute. The Tobacco Institute, as mentioned in the literature, disguised its legislative agenda. For instance, bills such as "Proposition 188" and "The Fire Safety Implementation Act" superficially appeared in the public's best interest, but actually limited or diminished such interests.

It was also noted in the literature that the Tobacco Institute attempted to unseat an Environmental Protection Agency official named Dr. David Burns, who was considered threatening to the tobacco industry. However, the attempt backfired when Burns managed to have his position reinstated with the benefit of publicity, while the industry was perceived as creating undue influence.

Another deceptive practice by tobacco companies involved the hiring of professional consultants who would undermine sound scientific research by creating public doubt and confusion.

Other tobacco company strategies included targeting various demographic groups for marketing cigarettes such as African-Americans, women, and teenagers. Companies approached African-Americans and women through sponsorships and funding of cultural and athletic events. Teenagers were lured by exposure to billboard, magazine, and supermarket cartoon advertising displays.

The *Journal of the American Medical Association's* article on the Brown and Williamson tobacco documents revealed a concerted effort by the company to conceal its research from the general public. The research confirmed what most scientific studies had been saying about tobacco's harmful ingredients and the addictive nature of nicotine.

According to the researcher's study, a majority of the 100 students surveyed,

(71%) had some familiarity with public relations practice.

Most respondents surveyed, (69%) perceived the news media's assessment of public relations in government, private industry or organizations as "Somewhat Honest."

However, when specifying public relations practice in the tobacco industry, more than half of the respondents, (52%) rated public relations as "Unfavorable." Students described the industry as deceptive because tobacco companies concealed the harmful ingredients in cigarette from consumers.

Also, the survey found that a majority of smokers, (53%) as well as nonsmokers, (63%) agreed that public relations practice in the tobacco industry is "Unfavorable."

A majority of respondents, (80%) who identified themselves as smokers believed that their attraction to cigarette was attributed to tobacco advertising and peer pressure.

It was interesting to note that a majority of students contradicted the "bottom line" philosophy held by company managers concerning sales and profits. When respondents were asked to hypothetically rate the most important categories as public relations director for the food and beverage industry, a clear majority, (75%) identified the quality of products sold to consumers and (65%) how consumers feel about the company as "Very Important."

Finally, the literature supports four main propositions regarding the misuse of public relations. First, ethical public relations practice in the tobacco industry reflects on the reputation of the organization and the public relations practitioner.

Second, tobacco company CEOs and public relations practitioners failed to be factual, honest, and open to facing problems and denied weaknesses when being able to

resolve problems.

Third, the ability of public relations practice to develop public acceptance for a good product or cause has been damaged by association with tobacco.

Fourth, public relations practitioners in the tobacco industry have failed to promote a social conscience in the industry, which has affected the legitimacy of public relations.

Recommendations

Listed below are seven recommendations for positive public relations practice in the tobacco industry and proper conduct by practitioners in the field:

- 1) Public relations practitioners develop meaningful dialogue with management staff to influence the decision-making process and to promote openness throughout the tobacco industry.
- 2) Public relations practitioners counsel management staff and the CEOs concerning the accessibility to news media officials on a regular basis (weekly, monthly, or quarterly) and communicate positive changes for the industry.
- 3) Public relations practitioners collaborate with managers on removing all domestic and foreign advertising that could be construed as appealing to teenagers.
- 4) Public relations practitioners be prepared to convince managers to meet with federal, state, and local government, and health officials to discuss alternatives uses for tobacco products if any; an example, medicinal use.
- 5) Public relations practitioners recommend to company managers and CEOs,

through legal and financial consultation, opportunities to avoid or lessen costly legal litigation by consumers and government entities. Therefore, a feasibility study be conducted to determine possible forms of compensation to consumers legitimately harmed by tobacco products.

- 6) Public relations practitioners provide management with a crisis plan in the event that further restrictions on tobacco use and declining sales cause employee layoffs. The plan would establish opportunities for job referrals and worker retraining. Also, the plan would advise CEOs on strategies for industry growth in alternative products or services.
- 7) If most of the previous recommendations are ineffective, then the practitioner must consider severing relations with the company, recognizing one's conflict of interest with the professional standards of conduct established by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA).

Recommendations for further Study

Two areas for further study might include the following:

- 1) A study that concerns techniques public relations practitioners could use to gauge their company's future successes or failures and for planning alternative strategies. Practitioners must be informed of the latest technological trends in medicine, science, and agriculture and how they affect the company's products or services. Consequently, a product that is considered safe and dependable to consumers today might be detrimental or obsolete tomorrow.
- 2) Another study concerns measuring and improving the effectiveness of public

relations practitioners and their working relationship with company managers and CEOs. For example, how influential are practitioners with managers, and how can they play a vital role in the decision-making process? Are practitioners able to appeal to managers beyond the "bottom line" philosophy of sales and profits? These questions could be addressed by a cultural study and comparison of American and foreign industries to determine what is mutually beneficial for practitioners and managers.

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