



# TOBACCO ADVERTISEMENTS

From glorious days to an uncertain future

by Annika, Ben and Lisa

\*Music intro and sound snippet: cigarette burning and person smoking\*

**Lisa:** Advertising in the tobacco industry has always played a very important role. The first tobacco advertisements appeared at the beginning of the 20th century, always with embellished depictions of smoking. For a long time, smoking was fashionable and there was nothing about the health consequences in the advertisements. Today, every pack of cigarettes shows a completely different picture. What influence did governments and laws have on the designs of tobacco advertisements?

Back in the time of the first world war around 1918, advertisements often featured soldiers in public. They ensured more recognition and profit for the tobacco industry. In terms of colour, the packs were often designed in yellow and red, with bold fonts and portraits of soldiers. "The cigarettes that win the war!" was the slogan for the appropriately named Victory cigarette, for example.

**Annika:** From the 1930s to the 1950s tobacco advertising's most powerful phrase was "doctors recommend". Cigarettes weren't seen as dangerous back then, but still, smokers felt the effect of cigarettes and coughed. To get the concerns out of the way, ads almost always featured a man dressed in white with a pack of cigarettes, often on a coloured background, and a promise like, "Give your throat a vacation.", or "Your throat's protection against irritation."

\*Snippet: Old Cigarette advertisement with a doctor's recommendation\*

**Annika:** Brands like Marlboro had so far concentrated on advertising their filter cigarettes for women, but wanted to expand their market to men, too. The Marlboro Man was born, a rugged, freedom-loving cowboy riding across far, open plains on horseback and living the free lifestyle so called "real man" dreamed of. The ads always included a cowboy dressed in leather with a hat and depicted images of horses or wild countrysides. Other brands also tried to convey this idea of independence and manliness through hired A-list celebrities and the like.

The advertisement for women showed a completely different picture. From slogans like "Made for your hands - and your lips." or "Slimmer than the fat cigarettes men smoke.", the advertisements almost always showed stereotypical beautiful women in tight clothes and with red lips. The purpose of all ads was the age-old principle of "sex sells."

In 1970 the first regulation for tobacco advertising obliged manufactures to add a health hazard warning to the ads, but the designs were not yet influenced much.

\*Snippet: Cigarette advertisement with focus on freedom and manliness\*

**Ben:** In the 1990s the advertisements for adults got more focused on sports and events. The idea was that people who smoke and live an exciting life and the ads try to portray them in various impressive situations. Car racing like NASCAR had big banners from brands like Marlboro and Camel, all showing the brands name in big fonts and bold colors. The "sex sells" approach was still heavily influencing the advertisements and slogans like "Pleasure to burn" and pictures of women in short deep-cut dresses were used all the time.

During the 90s tobacco advertisers were critiqued heavily and slammed with major lawsuits. They were ordered to spend billions on anti-smoking campaigns over the next 25 years, focusing on younger people and educating the public on the dangers of smoking. With that the advertisements changed and more and more firms designed posters and TV-ads informing about the risks and dangers of smoking. Most anti-smoking ads used imagery of the inside of a cigarette or tar, sometimes mixing them with images of the medical results of smoking in the lung or throat.

\*Snippet: Cigarette advertisement with the feeling that smoking is exciting and fun\*

**Ben:** With the dangers and risks of smoking entering the main focus and government laws forbidding smoking indoors in the 2000s, the glorious days of the Marlboro Man and other cigarette ad concepts became a thing of the past. In 2017 Germany banned the so far used designs on cigarette packets and it became mandatory to display the different effects on the body, society and others on every single cigarette packet. The warnings are printed in bold black and white fonts and horrific images make up the most of the packaging. Only a very small area is left for design and usually doesn't contain more than the brand's name.

\*Snippet: health hazard explanation and victim's story \*

Very recently in the beginning of 2021 another law was published in Germany which restricts the ads on posters even further. With this and the future plans of the governments across the world, the era of colorful tobacco ads portraying a free and fun life ended and will most likely not return.

\*Music outro and sound snippet: cigarette \*

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