

Marlboro Man Down But Not Out...Not yet!

Philip Morris's Marlboro Man may be down and out here, but he's ridden off to greener (\$\$) pastures in Asia, Russia, Central Europe, and Latin America. By 1998, Philip Morris had made an all-out assault on the lucrative overseas markets, "bushwacking public health regulations along the way."

The strategies included plastering the Marlboro logo on clothing and sports events aimed at youth and "sampling," in which attractive teens distributed free cigarettes to their peers. While Philip Morris disavowed such activities here, they remained rampant overseas. The problem had become so serious that the World Health Organization was negotiating the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in Geneva, foreseeing "more than a billion tobacco-related deaths this century."

Many investigative reports showed that Philip Morris and other major tobacco companies were actively, but subtly, working to undermine the treaty negotiations. Meanwhile, Philip Morris internal documents included such as, "Today's teenager is tomorrow's potential regular customer" and the Marlboro Man... "is the right image to capture the youth market's fancy."

Not all of the company's efforts were successful, though. In Indonesia, when Philip Morris and British American Tobacco offered a non-governmental tobacco control organization help with youth smoking prevention programs in return for the organization's help in stacking Indonesia's treaty delegation with tobacco industry representatives, they were rebuffed. Said efforts can also be not so subtle...witness Philip Morris's use of its food division, Kraft, to pressure developing countries into cooperating on tobacco regulation in return for Kraft's assistance with their food problems. [www.usnews.com]



But, the writing may be on the wall. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which China ratified in 2005, requires a comprehensive ban of all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship. Not good for the Marlboro Man. However, a 2011 analysis found that these advertising bans are not always complied with.

Further, outdoor advertising is not banned. So, although the Marlboro Man isn't what he used to be, he's still ridin' the range!

[China Daily USA - 5/31/2013]