

Dispelling Corporate Myths and Creating Partnership Opportunities

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Marketing to Children Panel

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Marin Institute - Strategies

- Expose the alcohol industry's harmful products, promotions, and practices
- Research viable policy strategies for reducing alcohol-related harm
- Support community action, coalitions, and campaigns to counter irresponsible industry behavior
- Proper framing of the issues

Common Themes / Tactics

- “Marketing Diseases” – caused by Big Tobacco, Big Alcohol, Big Food
- Key to success: gets kids hooked
- Similar use of kid-friendly images, icons, and media (especially digital) & targeting of minority youth
- Public Relations – same playbook
- Lobbying – undermining policymaking

Corporate Myth – What Problem?

- We don't market to youth
- There is no connection between tobacco/alcohol/food marketing and teen smoking/underage drinking/childhood obesity

Reality - Overwhelming Data, all 3

Each additional dollar spent on alcohol advertising per capita raises youth drinking by 3 percent.

(Snyder et al, 2006)

Corporate Myth – It's Parents' Fault

- Youth get alcohol from parents
- Parents take their kids to McDonald's, etc.
- Parents should talk to their kids
- Parents / kids just need to be educated

Reality – Parents Need Help

In many other areas of law, society helps parents

E.g., child labor laws, pornography, speed limits

Why do food companies aim ads at young children?

Corporate Myth: Self-Regulation Working Just Fine

- Alcohol - Industry trade groups' ad guidelines
DISCUS, Beer Institute, Wine Institute
- Food – CARU & “pledges” from companies

Reality – Dismal Failure

- Wording is weak, deliberately vague
- Unenforceable, voluntary, and limited
- Fox guarding the henhouse
- Distraction from government regulation

Corporate Myth – Free Speech

- First Amendment bars any government regulation of tobacco/alcohol/food advertising
- Method of intimidating advocates and government with threat of lawsuits

Reality – No Blanket Protection

Corporations are only entitled to “commercial speech” protection - lower standard than individual free speech

Governments can regulate advertising to protect public health and children

WHY WE NEED POLICY

Holding young people *solely* responsible for underage drinking is like holding fish accountable for dying in a polluted stream

- Laurie Leiber, Marin Institute

Outdoor Ads - Public Transit

- Youth are disproportionately exposed
- Captive audience – unmeasured media
- Income generated minimal compared to potential harm and costs to city/county
- First Amendment not a barrier to ban
- Local government, easier target
- Garner community support

Miller Beer Transit Ads

Madison, Wisconsin



Bus shelter near San Francisco
Elementary School



Transit Ads – Bay Area Success

- **Bay Area Rapid Transit**
 - considered reversing policy in 2006, community rallied to maintain ad ban
- **MUNI – San Francisco Bus Shelters**
 - Released report documenting numerous violations of ad policy early 2007, ads came down morning of press conference
 - **Must maintain public pressure**

Policy Solution - Transit Policies Just Saying No to Alcohol Ads

CALIFORNIA

- Los Angeles
- San Francisco MUNI
- Bay Area Rapid Transit
- Oakland
- Golden Gate Transit
- Santa Cruz Metro

OTHERS

- Seattle
- Washington, DC
- Chicago
- Baltimore
- Kansas City
- Miami-Dade
- Pittsburgh
- Honolulu
- Portland, OR
- Blacksburg
- Gainesville

Cross-Issue Approaches

- **Transit Ad policies** – should be “child-friendly” – no tobacco, alcohol, “junk food”, violent video games
- **Ban ads on government property** – Philadelphia, Somerville (MA), banned alcohol ads
- **Support groups working across issue**
 - Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood
 - Corporations and Health Watch
 - Center for Digital Democracy
 - Corporate Accountability International
- **Network with each other for ideas**

In Conclusion...

- Don't believe industry spin
- Self-regulation does not work
- Free speech does not protect all marketing
- Policy action is needed to protect youth
- Local options – outdoor ad restrictions
- Federal – lobby Congress, FTC
- Network with others to get inspiration!

Contact Marin Institute

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Book on food industry: AppetiteForProfit.com