



What is Marlboro Architecture 2.0?

Marlboro Architecture 2.0 refers to Philip Morris International’s rebranding strategy for their signature Marlboro products in an effort to recruit smokers. One of its initial marketing campaigns was “Be Marlboro”, which laid out marketing strategies for the future of the brand with slogans such as “Don’t be a maybe, be Marlboro” and other bold statements of independence and free will. These slogans were presented as billboards and point-of-sale advertisements.

History

In 2011 Philip Morris International launched the “Be Marlboro” campaign in Germany. The campaign was subsequently banned because it was believed to be targeting youth. In Metro Manila, Philippines, the campaign re-appeared in 2013. Researchers from the Institute for Global Tobacco Control were able to observe and gather qualitative data on a subsequent advertising campaign from Architecture 2.0, Marlboro Crossover.

Findings

Previous research has shown that liking an advertisement contributes to having an intention to use the product advertised. Similarly, results from 2016 found that for Filipino youth ages 13-17 years, a greater likeability towards, and perceived effectiveness of the Marlboro ads were associated with increased odds of youth having an intention to smoke in the next year. Focus group discussions further illustrated that Marlboro ads are distinctly appealing to youth.

Findings support concerns regarding the influence and appeal of Marlboro advertising in emerging markets. This is a clear example of the threat the tobacco industry poses to the health and economic well-being of citizens and therefore, overall economic growth.

How do adolescents perceive Marlboro Architecture 2.0 advertisements? To find out, we asked 48 Filipino adolescents, ages 13-17 years old, in Metro Manila, Philippines to gauge which elements of the advertisements were appealing.

“[It’s] cool because it’s different from the usual product. Others will tell you straight to buy it, but this one tells you that it’s up to you if you want it or not.” (low-SES, Non-Smoker)

Many believed the ad to be talking to “[the] younger generation” (mid-SES, Non-Smoker), “cheerful” and “adventurous” people (mid-SES, Smoker)

A concern is that “you can’t tell what product it is” (low-SES, Non-Smoker); “I thought it was candy” (high-SES, Smoker).

