



STOPPING TOBACCO ORGANIZATIONS & PRODUCTS

# ADDICTION AT ANY COST

*Philip Morris International Uncovered*

STOP's report, *Addiction at Any Cost: Philip Morris International Uncovered*, examines tobacco industry documents, sales data and findings from tobacco industry monitoring and shows that Philip Morris International (PMI) is not, in reality, attempting to "create a smoke-free future." Instead, PMI is working to drive up cigarette sales and hook a new generation of users on its next generation products (NGPs). Read the full report for more information about how the company and its Foundation for a Smoke-Free World are deceiving the public.

## *The Tobacco Industry and Harm Reduction: A History of Deception*

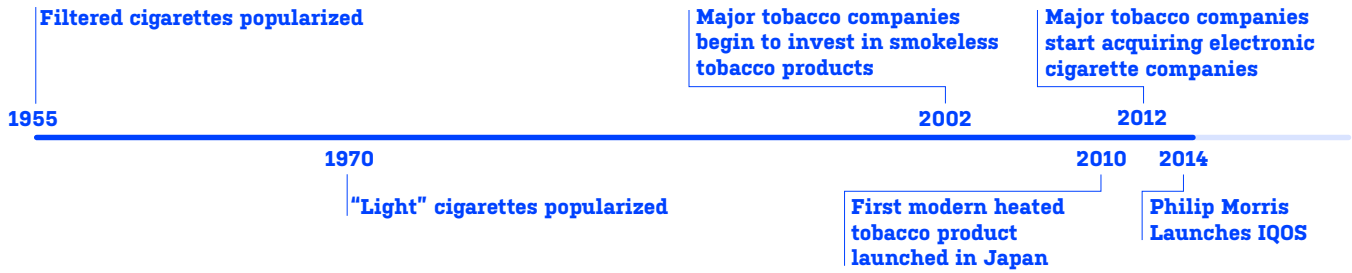
Tobacco companies have a long history of launching new products in response to the threat of decreasing cigarette sales. The promotion of these new products was intended to demonstrate the tobacco industry's supposed commitment to reducing the harm caused by cigarettes. However, tobacco companies' own internal documents reveal that they have never been interested in reducing harm. Instead, the industry has repeatedly invested in so-called "reduced harm" products as a calculated response to protect company profits by preventing smokers from quitting and attracting new users.

### **Key Messages**

History shows that the tobacco industry has repeatedly launched new products and claimed a commitment to harm reduction, but each time, this has been a tactical response to threats to profitability rather than a genuine commitment to reducing harm.

Evidence shows that the tobacco industry uses recurring investments in so-called "reduced harm" products to curb declines in sales and ultimately generate profits by creating new forms of tobacco use that aim to prevent quitting altogether and attract new users.

In addition to protecting profits, the tobacco industry also invests in so-called "reduced harm" products to rehabilitate its tarnished image, weaken effective tobacco control policies and divide the public health community.



## The tobacco industry has a history of undermining harm reduction for profit

History shows that the tobacco industry has never been committed to harm reduction. In reality, investments in new products serve only to rehabilitate the industry's image and ultimately weaken tobacco control. Further, each attempt by the tobacco industry to introduce unproven reduced harm products has provided a pathway to future profits by preventing quitting, attracting new users and eliminating competition.

### 1950s-1970s: Filter tipped and "light" cigarettes

In response to growing health concerns about tobacco use, tobacco companies developed and promoted filtered cigarettes and so-called "light" cigarettes as less harmful products, positioning them as alternatives to quitting.

- **Rehabilitated its image:** Tobacco industry internal documents show that the industry promoted these products as reducing health risks despite knowing that they offered no such benefits.
- **Weakened tobacco control:** The promotion of "light" cigarettes convinced some governments to hold off on regulating tobacco products and even advise smokers to switch to "light" alternatives if they could not quit altogether.
- **Provided a pathway to profit:** Filtered and "light" cigarettes proved a resounding commercial success. Internal industry documents reveal that tobacco companies intentionally designed and promoted these products to prevent concerned smokers from quitting, attract new users—especially women—and increase consumption by manipulating the products to be more addictive.

## History is repeating with tobacco industry investment in next generation products (NGPs)

### 2010s-Present: E-cigarettes and heated tobacco products

As the social acceptability of smoking falls and global smoking prevalence declines, the tobacco industry has invested heavily in acquiring, developing and promoting a host of technologically sophisticated NGPs, such as e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products.

### 1970s-2000s: Portioned smokeless tobacco and snus

Starting in the 1970s, tobacco companies began exploring opportunities in "portioned smokeless tobacco," such as snus popularized in Sweden, a product easier to consume and more appealing to a mass market. While tobacco industry scientists concluded early on that smokeless tobacco was "probably" less hazardous than smoking, it was almost 30 years later when profits from cigarette sales were particularly vulnerable before companies began investing in the product.

- **Rehabilitated its image:** With snus, the industry identified "harm reduction" as a "reputation management" tactic and rapidly appropriated the term from public health to use in public relations to claim a joint agenda with public health.
- **Weakened tobacco control:** Tobacco companies labeled smokeless products with popular cigarette brands, promoted use of smokeless products in smoke-free places and targeted nonsmokers. Tobacco companies also used harm reduction claims associated with smokeless tobacco products to secure policy influence by presenting themselves as "partners rather than adversaries" for tobacco control.
- **Provided a pathway for profit:** Tobacco companies used smokeless tobacco products to "generate new profits without cannibalizing existing profits from cigarette sales" by creating a new form of tobacco use among those no longer willing to smoke, promoting dual-use and developing marketing campaigns targeting young non-tobacco users. By acquiring most snus manufacturers in the early 2000s, the major tobacco companies were also able to eliminate competition.

- **Rehabilitated its image:** Tobacco companies are investing in large PR campaigns to present the industry as committed to reducing harm in offering smokers' alternatives and becoming part of the solution to the tobacco epidemic. After decades of pariah status, industry representatives are once again sharing platforms with public health experts in discussions about harm reduction.
- **Weakened tobacco control:** With NGPs, tobacco companies can undermine existing tobacco advertising and smoking bans and distract policy makers from evidence-based policy by promoting unproven harm reduction products over established tobacco control measures.
- **Provided for future growth:** The tobacco industry uses NGPs to maintain users who might otherwise quit altogether and to create new users. According to tobacco company investor presentations, new products are now increasing the total number of nicotine users, which had been in decline—this new growth is being driven by new users and dual-users.