

Ten Reasons to Avoid Partnerships with the Tobacco Industry

1. Tobacco companies assume that nonprofits desperately need money and will ignore that the "gift" comes from the deadliest drug cartel in the world. They are hoping your people will only notice the good deeds they do and forget how they are harming the very population you want to help.

2. Donations to nonprofits provide big tobacco with a tax deduction and good publicity. The public sees the tobacco company as well intentioned and generous. In reality, their product kills 485,000 people each year and this money covers up those deaths. It allows people to think of this as just another business. It is not. The tobacco cartel has taken an unjust advantage of the American people.

3. Organizations that are sponsored by tobacco or that advertise tobacco products are silenced by big tobacco. Women's organizations take tobacco dollars and don't educate about the fact that lung cancer now kills more women than breast cancer. Magazines take advertising dollars and neglect to write about tobacco in their coverage of health issues.

4. Tobacco industries are in business to make money for their stockholders not to create a healthier world. Tobacco companies hide their profits. They create holding companies, purchase media, and buy food companies like Kraft and Gevalia in an attempt to shelter their profits from lawsuits.

5. Tobacco is responsible for one in every five deaths in America. The 3,000 youth who start smoking every day in America are necessary replacements for the deceased smokers. They cannot go out of the business of selling tobacco illegally to our children. Kids are essential to their continued profit.

6. Tobacco costs business owners, taxpayers and insurance companies billions of dollars annually in lost productivity, health care and absenteeism. The gifts and donations do not balance the emotional and economic costs of tobacco to each and every one of us. Most of us have lost a loved one to tobacco.

7. Tobacco companies have lied in their ads, in courts, and to government agencies for more than 60 years. They have known their product is addictive. They designed it to be more addictive. They have known their product causes cancer, heart disease and disabilities. They covered up the facts by conducting a well-funded campaign to cast doubt by paying scientists and doctors to lie for them and hiring attorneys to hide the facts from their own research.

8. Tobacco companies continue to lie to the public. At the same time that tobacco companies are paying out large sums of money to settle claims, they are passing those costs on to smokers. Some say that they have admitted that tobacco is addictive and cancer causing, but they still haven't changed the product or their messages to consumers. But they continue to cast doubt on proven facts about tobacco, clean indoor air, financial effects on restaurants (none) and the effects of their advertising.

9. Tobacco companies prevent consumers from having the normal protections of local, state and federal regulations. All tobacco products should be treated as drugs-advertising, promotion, marketing should be banned, ingredients should be listed and strict controls should protect children. Why not? Ask how much the tobacco cartel gives to your elected representatives and their political parties.

10. Tobacco companies need more youth, women, African Americans, Asian and Pacific Islanders and Hispanics to smoke for the sake of their future profits. Youth, women, and people of color represent many potential new customers. They will develop these new markets while they continue to sell to white males - young and old who represent their daily bread and butter.