

Fighting sedentary lifestyle and obesity in the 21st century: what the fitness business services can learn from the tobacco industry

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Introduction

- Non-communicable chronic diseases (NCDs) are co-responsible for 3 out of 4 deaths in Brazil and 71% of deaths worldwide in 2016 (Munaier & Tavares, 2019; WHO, 2018).
- Among the causes of NCDs, sedentary lifestyle and obesity are added to tobacco consumption (Kennedy et al., 2018; Munaier, 2019; Munaier & Tavares, 2019; WHO, 2018).
- The tobacco industry skillfully instigated the smoking habit, and their marketing strategies gave tobacco consumption a feeling of belonging, dominance, sexual appeal, and search for adventure (Sargent et al., 2001).
- For the harm caused by smoking globally, the WHO and national governments created campaigns against cigarette consumption and its habit, using the same tool previously used in the tobacco industry: communication strategies (WHO, 2017).
- However, to stimulate the practice of physical activity and for the war against sedentary lifestyle and obesity, actions are still very timid and lack strategies because the sedentary lifestyle rate in Brazil is very high, and new approaches to communication must be made (Brasil, 2017; Munaier, 2019; Munaier & Tavares, 2019).

Introduction

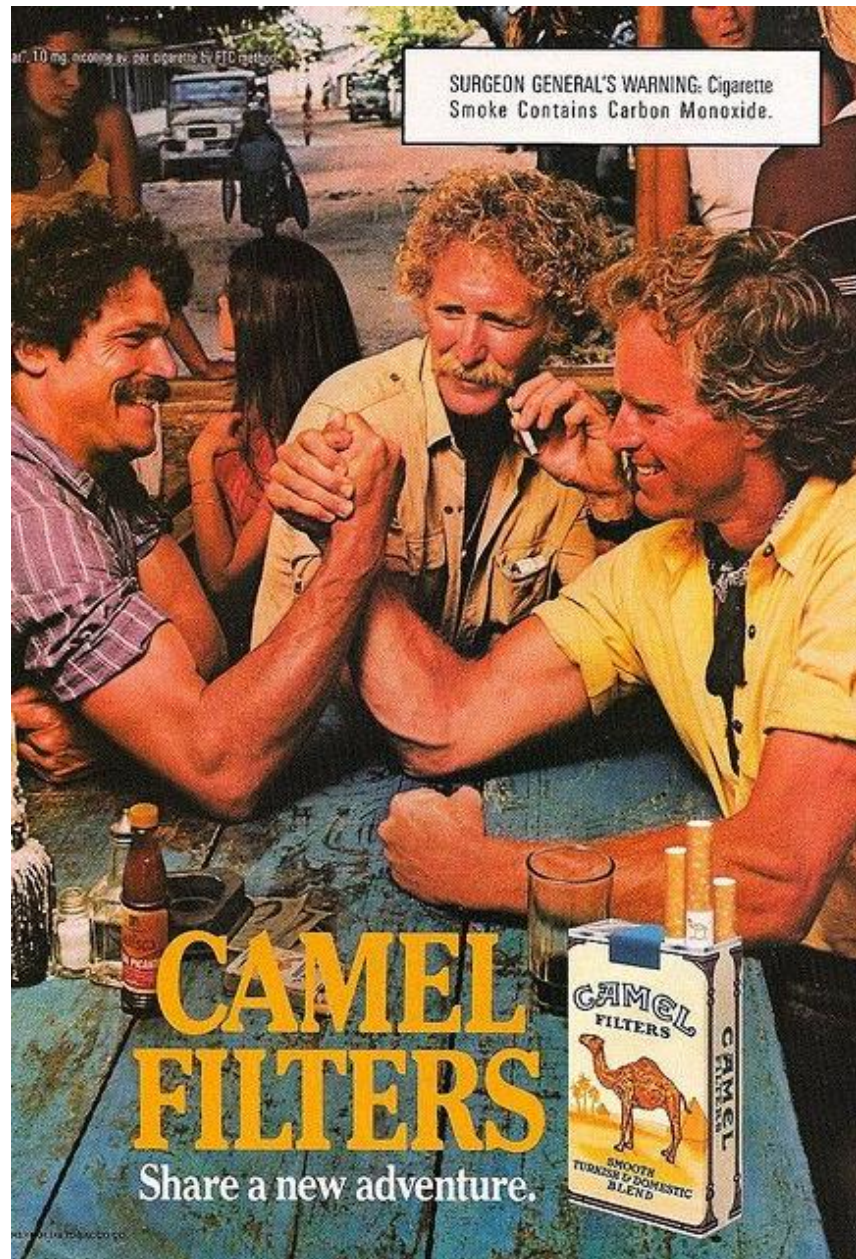
- This essay proposes a look at the successful strategies of the tobacco industry and proposes to be the fitness and wellness market the proper campaigns' "spokesperson" for many made by tobacco brands.
- We seek to answer two research questions (RQ).
 - RQ 1) Is it possible to point out ways of action of the marketing operator in achieving the decision of the potential consumer for the fitness business by observing marketing strategies found by the tobacco industry to win over its audience?
 - RQ2) Can public campaigns discouraging smoking serves as a way for the public authorities to discourage sedentary lifestyle, consequently stimulating the population to practice physical activity in a regular and oriented way?

Tobacco consumption and industry strategies

- Brand personality can be defined as a set of human characteristics associated with the brand, in a symbolic or self-expressive function that allows consumers to associate human personality traits with the brand (Fortes et al., 2019) and has a prominent role in the construction of feelings that the consumer nourishes by the brand (Gendall et al., 2011; Munaier et al., 2021).
- Tobacco brands, which showed their products as passports for a more active, adventurous, and safe life, used branding strategies and the attributes that awaken consumer's brand loyalty, such as brand personality (Munaier et al., 2021).
- It is possible to observe the tobacco brands strategies using what Maslow (1958, 1970) called the human needs in the hierarchy of human motivations.

Tobacco consumption and industry strategies

- The various marketing plans described in tobacco companies' internal documents lead us to consider that smoking is a communicable disease conveyed by economic interests, which use complex strategies – most often unfair (Cavalcante, 2005; Dewhirst & Sparks, 2003).
- The reference groups' role is a significant factor in smoking adoption (Cavalcante, 2005; Sargent et al., 2001).
- The reference groups exert direct or indirect influence on the person's attitudes or behavior (Park & Lessig, 1977).
- Sargent et al. (2001) recorded the importance of movies at the beginning of tobacco addiction.
- "Teenagers see movie stars smoking in the context of sexuality (Sharon Stone in "Basic Instinct"), dominance (John Travolta in "Broken Arrow"), romance (Charlie Sheen in "The Chase") and teen rebellion (Leonardo DiCaprio in "Romeo and Juliet") and to relieve stress (Winona Ryder in 'Interrupted Girl')" (Sargent et al., 2001, p. 1).



Anti-tobacco campaigns

- While the tobacco industry seeks to draw attention to pleasure, health organizations try to highlight the consequences of this momentary pleasure.
- According to Reitsma et al. (2017), Brazil achieved the third most significant fall in tobacco consumption, by age, since 1990.
- Between 1990 and 2015, the daily percentage of smokers in Brazil fell from 29% to 12% among men and 19% to 8% among women, but the country still ranks 8th in the world's ranking of smoking (Reitsma et al. 2017; WHO, 2017).
- Campaigns have been aired worldwide to reduce nicotine intake by smokers (WHO, 2017).
- The efforts of the State and health organizations have been to deconstruct the narrative that the smoker is sensual and popular, socially dominant, and fun has had an effect.

Sedentary lifestyle, obesity and the Fitness Business Services (FBS)

- Obesity and overweight in adults bring as consequences diseases widely documented by science and causing premature death by NCDs.
- Wannmacher (2016, p.2) warns that “obese children have breathing difficulties, increased risk of fractures, psychological and early effects indicators of cardiovascular disease and insulin resistance”.
- Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2018) define that, in consumption, perception is a process by which the individual selects, analyzes, and interprets the information collected by sensory receptors.
- One of the great challenges of 21st-century society is also a challenge for the fitness and wellness market in Brazil and the world: to unveil what moves (!) the individual to practice physical activity on a regular and oriented way (Gómez-López et al., 2011; Munaier, 2019).

Sedentary lifestyle, obesity and the Fitness Business Services (FBS)

- Scholars have demonstrated the prominent FBS's role as an effective solution to combat sedentary lifestyle.
- Munaier and Tavares (2019) demonstrated the gyms' role in combating obesity and proposed a new indicator for public health management in the fight against sedentary lifestyle and obesity: "number of gyms per 100,000 inhabitants".
 - Their research points out that, in countries with a ratio of more than 10 gyms per 100,000 inhabitants, the population's penetration rate to physical activity is more than 15%.
 - In these countries, the average life expectancy is more than 80 years old. In times of COVID-19, gyms have also proved to be important allies in raising awareness of the importance of physical activity.
- Munaier et al. (2021) demonstrated that gym users (vs. non-users) were more aware (vs. less aware) of the negative impact of obesity and sedentary lifestyle on people infected by the Sars-CoV-2.
 - In other words, gyms are important channels of communication and awareness of the harms of sedentary lifestyle

RQ 1: Is it possible to point out ways of action for the FBS observing marketing strategies found by the tobacco industry to win over its audience?

- The tobacco industry has built powerful narratives to associate with its products affiliation, belonging, and self-realization, key elements of Maslow's theory
- Some of its iconic brands have taken on personalities such as:
 - Marlboro and its cowboy, tying its consumer to the figure of the alpha male.
 - Hollywood to the sporting world or the conqueror.
 - Lucky Strike tied to the slender woman.
- Marketing operators can be a powerful component in the construction of the narrative that conquers and the practitioner of physical activity through the lessons arising from the successful campaigns of the tobacco industry, however contradictory it may seem.
- As a matter of fact, what was contradictory was the tobacco industry taking over assets such as sportsmanship, safety, and aesthetic issues due to its consumption.

Needs Scale	To whom it is intended and modalities	Why is it
Security	All age groups and all possibilities of activity. Examples: swimming and martial arts	Physical safety is ultimately the essence of physical activity results, as described in the literature review on the physical activity benefits.
Level of affiliation or love	All age groups and in all modalities. Example: CrossFit, and Les Mills programs	Belonging is one of the most critical elements in the value co-creation in the FBS usage experience.
Level of esteem: self-esteem, status, recognition, attention, importance, and appreciation	All age groups and in all modalities. Especially for those seeking treatment against depression. Example: bodybuilding and running groups	The physical activity practice can be an antidote to depression. Physical activity is effective in treating depression. The effect is of the same magnitude as psychotherapeutic interventions.
Level of self-realization: what the individual has the potential to be	All age groups and in all modalities. Example: functional training and indoor cycling	Practitioners can use physical activity to achieve their best performance within their limitations and genetic predispositions. Furthermore, the gym can engage employees and clients in community actions and offer them a sense of social contribution.

RQ2: Can public campaigns to discourage smoking serve as a way for the public government to discourage sedentary lifestyle?

- In addition to financial actions, the incentive for regular physical activity practice should be part of institutional campaigns to combat sedentary lifestyle and obesity, in the someway as campaigns against tobacco:
 - monitor more consistently sedentary lifestyle;
 - applying policies to prevent sedentary behavior;
 - protection of public spaces where people engage in physical activity;
 - offering financial help and psychological support to people against the habit of consuming over-processed foods;
 - warning intensely on the dangers of obesity and sedentary lifestyle;
 - imposing prohibitions on advertising, promotion, and sponsorship of foods considered harmful to health and increase taxes on them.



Conclusion

- Fitness companies are part of the solution to combat prosperity-related diseases such as obesity and coronary heart disease
- The national health managers need to find the best narratives in creating value for the (non) users.
- It is possible to conclude that the FBS is a legitimate
- Joint actions between the government and the private sector can bring mutual benefits
- A government action plan is needed, along with what has been put into place to reduce smoking – and with positive effects already pointed here – to reduce sedentary lifestyle and obesity.



Conclusion

- The contribution to the advancement of social and corporate marketing literature lies in the unique approach of this essay, observing the practices used to attract smokers as validated marketing strategies to attract consumers to regular physical activity practice.
- As a contribution to public health and business management, it is aimed to contribute by proposing that managers observe risk awareness strategies to reduce tobacco consumption as an alternative to building awareness strategies about the sedentary lifestyle and obesity risks.
- Among the limitations, the fact that this essay is the result of the authors' observations raises the need for new perspectives on these topics of such relevant interest, both in the context of public health and business management.
- A quantitative investigation of predictors of human behavior and the modalities described in Figure 2 can advance the proposal presented here.

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