

RESEARCH PAPER

Finding the Kool Mixx: how Brown & Williamson used music marketing to sell cigarettes

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Objective: To describe the history of Kool's music-themed promotions and analyse the role that music played in the promotion of the brand.

Methods: Analysis of previously secret tobacco industry documents, legal documents, and promotional materials.

Results: Brown & Williamson started Kool sponsorship of musical events in 1975 with Kool Jazz concerts. Music was considered to be an effective marketing tool because: (1) music helped consumers make emotional connections with the brand; (2) music concerts were effective for targeted marketing; (3) music tied together an integrated marketing campaign; and (4) music had potential to appeal widely to a young audience. Brown & Williamson's first music campaigns successfully targeted young African-American male audiences. Subsequent campaigns were less effective, exploring different types of music to achieve a broader young adult appeal.

Conclusions: This case study suggests Brown & Williamson used music most successfully for targeted marketing, but they failed to develop a wider audience using music because their attempts lacked consistency with the Kool brand's established identity. The 2004 "Kool Mixx" campaign both returned to Brown & Williamson's historic practice targeting young African-American males, and also exploited a musical genre with much more potential to bring Kool more universal appeal, as hip-hop music is increasingly popular among diverse audiences. Tobacco control efforts led by African-American community activists to oppose these marketing strategies should continue; expanding these coalitions to include the hip-hop community may further increase their effectiveness.

In early 2004, widespread media attention focused on Brown & Williamson's "Kool Mixx" campaign for the menthol brand Kool. The campaign was designed to promote Kool cigarettes through an association with hip-hop music and culture, and led to public outcry over the sale and distribution of limited-edition graphic cigarette packs featuring cartoon-like images. That spring, at the urging of community activists and tobacco control advocates such as the National African American Tobacco Prevention Network (NAATPN), the Attorneys General of New York, Maine, Illinois and Maryland, acting on behalf of 35 other states and jurisdictions, wrote to Brown & Williamson (B&W), asking them to terminate the "Kool Mixx" promotion, pointing out the campaign's appeal to youth and several violations of the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA).¹ In June 2004 the New York Supreme Court issued a restraining order prohibiting much of the campaign, leading to a recall of "Kool Mixx" promotional cigarette packs.²

Hip-hop began as an African-American and Puerto-Rican youth culture consisting of graffiti art, breakdancing, and rap music.³ Hip-hop is the most popular music genre among youth age 12–24 years, and it is more popular among these youth than among older age groups.⁴ Music plays a large role in both teen and young adult lifestyle and identity formation.⁵ Although the Kool Mixx campaign was stopped based on its youth appeal, the Kool brand has a long history of using music in its marketing, particularly as a means to access African-American cultural identities. An historical analysis of the Kool music campaigns may identify objectives that were established over the brand's history, and that may re-emerge in future music promotions.

While music sponsorship by different cigarette brands has been documented in the literature and press,^{6–9} Kool was one of the first brands to pursue concert sponsorship with the

Kool Jazz Festival in 1975, and sustain music promotions over the years. The Kool brand also provides a timely and interesting perspective on both music marketing and the targeting of African-American smokers. Prior studies of Kool's advertising focused on the social factors driving the growth of the African-American menthol market,^{10 11} and Kool's international promotions.¹² To gain a more thorough understanding of the motivations for the 2004 Kool Mixx campaign, we analysed the history of Kool cigarettes with a focus on the brand's music campaigns.

METHODS

The research objectives guiding our analysis were to unearth the history of Kool's music-themed promotions, analyse the role that music played in the promotion of the brand, and determine B&W's internal motivations and expectations for their music campaigns. We searched tobacco industry document archives from the University of California, San Francisco Legacy Tobacco Documents Library (legacy.library.ucsf.edu), and Tobacco Documents Online (www.tobaccodocuments.org). Tobacco industry document internet sites and the British American Tobacco archives (http://bat.library.ucsf.edu/) were searched for supplemental information.

Searches were conducted between August 2004 and January 2005. Initial search terms included: Kool, Music, Mixx, Brand Plan, Kool Promotion. Initial searches yielded thousands of documents; we reviewed those documents related to music sponsorship and the Kool brand. Searches were repeated and focused using standard techniques.¹³ Further "snowball" searches for contextual information on

Abbreviations: B&W, Brown & Williamson; KMDP, Kool Market Development Program; MSA, Master Settlement Agreement; NAATPN, National African American Tobacco Prevention Network

relevant documents were conducted using names, project titles, brand names, document locations, dates, and reference (Bates) numbers. This analysis is based on a final collection of 220 research reports, presentations, memorandums, advertisements, and plans, which were analysed in detail. The authors reviewed the documents, organised them chronologically, and wrote summary memoranda. Common themes were identified and discussed; additional questions that arose were resolved by gathering additional data. The final collection of documents which related to music addressed four main topics: the role that B&W hoped music would play in Kool's cigarette advertising; its use in the targeting of African-American smokers; music's role as a focal point in integrated marketing campaigns; and B&W's plans for global music promotions. Information found in industry documents was triangulated with data from searches of the published literature, tobacco company annual reports, online search engines, news stories, legal documents and promotional materials.

RESULTS

Kool history

A detailed early history of Kool from its introduction in 1933 through the 1970s has been described by Gardiner.¹¹ B&W positioned Kool as a specialty medicinal product for its first two decades.¹⁴⁻¹⁶ Kool remained the only menthol brand with significant market share until the appearance of Salem in 1956 and Newport in 1957.¹⁷ By 1960 these three menthol brands occupied a 12.4% share of the total cigarette market. B&W documents credit this increase in menthol use to Salem's repositioning of menthol cigarettes from medicinal products to cigarettes for all occasions.¹⁸⁻²⁰ Kool dropped the medicinal ad lines in 1962; by 1965 menthols occupied 17.6% of the total US cigarette market, with Salem commanding 50% and Kool 25% of the menthol market. By 1970 Kool increased its share from 25% to 35% of the menthol market. This increase was attributed to Kool's strength with young adult males and African-American smokers.^{16 18 19 21}

During the 1960s, the civil rights movement and the increasing visibility of African-American images in the media brought increased attention from a myriad of consumer product manufacturers, including cigarette companies that began to actively target the African-American market.²² B&W made systematic efforts to target African-American smokers throughout the 1960s, running Kool ads in African-American newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and especially on television.^{10 11 23} B&W's aggressive targeting of African-Americans was in part a response to the increasing popularity of menthol cigarettes in African-American communities, as cigarettes of all types were advertised in magazines like *Ebony* and on African-American radio stations.²² B&W's marketing firm, Cunningham & Walsh, proposed varying theories for the increase in menthol's popularity in this market, including its possible appeal to marijuana smokers, "the self-medication propensity of the Black market", and "the image of the word 'cool' in the Blacks' vocabulary".¹⁸ The marketing firm also concluded that, "An increase in Kools' advertising and promotion to blacks and youth in the late 60's speeded up these developments."¹⁸ Spurred by growth in the African-American and young male markets, Kool became the nation's third most popular selling cigarette brand in 1973. By 1975 African-American smokers accounted for 46.6% of the brand's total sales and 38% of all African-American smokers used Kool.¹⁸

Kool remained the leading menthol brand throughout the 1970s, but its command over the market began to diminish during the latter half of the decade. An overview of Kool prepared by Cunningham & Walsh blames poor image management and "product image deterioration" during a

period of changing lifestyles, citing problems in effectively translating Kool's television campaign to print and in reaching African-American smokers.¹⁸ "Upwardly mobile" African-American smokers may have been less willing to smoke a brand associated strictly with African-American smokers.¹⁰

In 1975 B&W began what would become a long history of music-themed promotions for Kool when it partnered with jazz promoter George Wein to offer the first Kool Jazz concert in New York City. The Kool Jazz Festival initially launched to overcome deficiencies in the targeting of African-American smokers.²⁴ Subsequently, the festival grew into a formal "Kool Music" campaign, which included Kool Jazz Festivals, Kool Country on Tour, Kool Latino Festivals, and Kool Super Nights. B&W expanded the Super Nights promotions internationally, sponsored the HORDE Festival, and released CDs of new rock musicians before its 1998 hip-hop music campaigns.

Why B&W used music to sell Kool

We identified several reasons why B&W pursued music sponsorship for the Kool brand: (1) music provided an emotional hook for consumers to identify with the brand; (2) music promotions facilitated targeted marketing; (3) music could focus an integrated marketing campaign; (4) music had potential for universal appeal.

Music helps people connect with the brand

In the early 1980s, after the successes of the early Kool Jazz Concerts,²⁴ B&W increased its music-themed advertisements and promotions. Kool's marketers felt that music would be a powerful medium for conveying emotional messages about cigarettes and building a brand image.²⁵ A 1981 B&W document titled "Kool Music Property" introduces some of the rationale for music marketing:

- 1) Music is the framework or building block for a deep, emotionally resonating theme. This theme is multidimensional as follows:

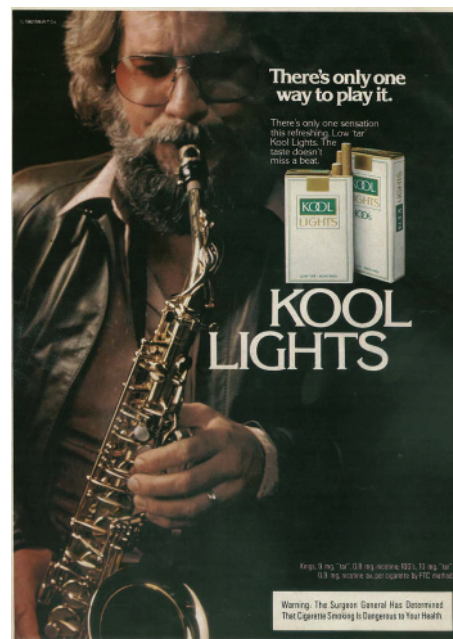


Figure 1 Kool print advertisement from 1983 featuring a musician. Advertisement from Dr Virginia Ernster's private collection, published in *TIME* 24 January 2003.

- a. Nostalgia—Music causes people to recall personas, places, experiences that were meaningful. It is a fantasy/transport mechanism.
- b. Reflection of Mood—Music helps people relax or mirror their excitement/enthusiasm. To exploit this theme many cues can be used to telegraph the message.
- c. Group Identification—Music helps people feel part of a group and can symbolize their status and important lifestyle values. This is particularly important among young adults who have few possessions to communicate their status.²⁶

Consumer research revealed Jazz was popular among a cross section of consumers, and ads during this period featured images of jazz musicians performing with their instruments (fig 1).^{27–29}

Music promotions facilitate targeted marketing

The primary reason that B&W first undertook the Kool Jazz festival and other related musical promotions was to maintain and augment their market share in the African American community. Kool's music campaign was originally developed "on a strategy of more effectively reaching a major segment of our target audience, providing some kind of a 'reward' for this same group in the form of shows at bargain prices, and using the events to offset Black media availability deficiencies."²⁴

In 1982, B&W began promoting events in small clubs; these "bar nights" became a cornerstone for the subsequent Kool Mixx campaign.^{30–32} B&W also used vans equipped with speakers blasting music and offering free Kool cigarette samples in inner city neighbourhoods. The "Kool Mobile Music Tour"³³ intercepted the "target audience at grass roots level with a sound and motion, physical, party promotion package which can be tailored (with appropriate music) to the crowd present"³⁴ and by using "disc jockey/drivers"³⁵ to distribute sample cigarettes, keychains, lighters, flying discs, and clothes.³⁶

The vans were part of an overall strategic effort to reach inner city African-American smokers. B&W initiated the Kool Market Development Program (KMDP) in 1981 in Houston to "defend Kool's strong Black franchise"³⁷ and "maintain media dominance among Blacks".³⁷ The KMDP distributed free samples at African-American events in inner city markets, and created original events, such as an updated version of the Kool Jazz Festival, called Kool City Jam, a two-day free concert series specifically targeting African-American young adults.³⁸ The programme also encouraged the involvement of sales representatives and managers in "retail and community organizations that will assist in fostering positive relations in the Black community",³⁰ a strategy which has been described in prior studies.³⁹

Music can tie together an integrated marketing campaign

One of the main goals of the music programme was to develop an integrated marketing campaign delivering a consistent message across promotional platforms. In 1981 B&W planned to expand Kool Music from simple concert sponsorship to more integrated music promotions that would "develop publicity that functions as alternative advertising" and "create a unified program that is completely integrated into Kool's traditional advertising plans".²⁴ BL Broecker, B&W Brand Manager, observed:

...the concert program alone does not provide the kind of total involvement with music that is necessary to provide the preemptive position that the brand needs to truly

capitalize on its creative positioning. ...it's important to have a posture of being committed to music and this means being involved at all levels of participation, from encouraging the development of new artists to the promotion and preservation of relevant aspects of music history.²⁴

Broecker recommended additional music related activities to reinforce the national Kool Jazz Festival^{24 40} including ads in "ethnic" papers and magazines, direct mailings to 125 000 patrons, plans for Kool music albums, and a quarterly music magazine.^{41–43}

Additionally, B&W recognised that an integrated marketing campaign centred on music could circumvent advertising restrictions. A 1980 document detailing the objectives of the Kool Music programme included developing "a contingency program which would enable us to advertise and promote Kool cigarettes in a climate of more restrictive legislation".⁴⁴ The "well publicized association of Kool with [music] sponsorship" and the development of "proprietary and preemptive formats for each musical venture" could cement Kool's brand identity into the minds of consumers and allow the brand multiple avenues of communication in the event that some would be eliminated due to marketing restrictions.⁴⁴

Music has potential for universal appeal

While music served as an effective means to target African-American smokers, B&W later attempted to use music to expand its audience, especially as Kool's market share began to drop in the early 1980s:

The challenge for Kool, therefore, was to develop advertising that could span the racial division within the franchise...not ignore it, not stonewall it...The creative minds were let loose to find an idea or symbol that was truly Pan-Racial (Universal-Racial)...an idea that transcended the color of a smoker's skin.²⁰

The search for a universal pan-racial ad campaign required a balance between attracting and excluding smokers based on their musical preferences. By 1978, due to a "growing concern that the more successful the Festivals became, the Blacker the image would become", Kool's brand handlers began to offer promotions featuring "other forms of music to bring some balance into the total user imagery for the brand".²⁴ Attempting to attract a wider audience, B&W added Kool Country on Tour, Kool Super Nights, and Kool Latin events in 1979 and 1980.^{45 46}

B&W also planned to export their music campaign internationally in the early 1980s, developing an international marketing strategy promoting Kool as representative of "American culture" through an association with American music. A 1981 (estimated) B&W document introduces the development of a globally standardised brand identity for Kool:

Kool is uniquely suited to export a piece of powerful indigenous American culture—American music—which is as potentially strong as the cowboy...There are few cultural expressions as universal as 'music.'... It would appear that the timing is right for Kool overseas, following Marlboro with a powerful piece of American culture for young adult smokers to buy into → the 'music' property presents this opportunity ...Kool needs to be served up like Levi's, McDonald's, and Coke.⁴⁷

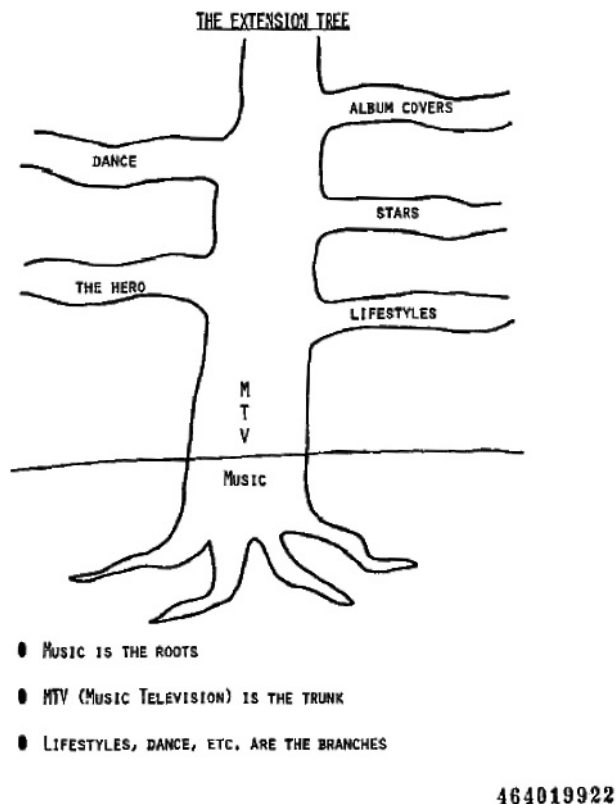


Figure 2 Kool international advertising campaign planning document showing central use of music.⁴⁶

In the same document, B&W plans the globalisation of Kool’s brand identity using music as “a universal proposition that has no age, sex or cultural barriers”⁴⁷ to bridge disparate cultures and especially to reach young people.⁴⁸

In 1984, Cunningham & Walsh developed a strategic framework for an integrated international promotion for Kool cigarettes, illustrating an “Extension Tree” with “music” at the roots, “MTV” as the trunk, and dance, album covers, stars, heroes, and lifestyles as the branches (fig 2).⁴⁹ Kool began testing music ads in Japan in 1983,⁵⁰ launched the “Kool Super Nights World Tour”, a series of free concerts in the summer of 1984 held in Germany, Guam, Korea, Okinawa, Panama and the United States,⁵¹ and planned future concerts in Malaysia.⁵²

Kool risked abandoning its established image during the search for a more universally appealing musical image. This appears to have led to problems with inconsistent brand identities in the mid to late 1980s. In 1985, Kool Biker, which symbolised masculine freedom and independence, replaced Kool music.^{53 54} In 1986, contradicting the masculine biker image, B&W shifted the focus of their promotions to Kool Milds. In 1987 they combined the ad lines for the regular and low-tar offering with “Kool & Mild Today” advertisements.⁵⁵ By 1991 the company again shifted emphasis to Kool Milds. In the early 1990s Kool performed very poorly; in the mid-1990s corporate reports pushed to “revitalize” Kool.⁵⁶ Einson Freeman Inc subsequently initiated the “get into the Kool Life” ad campaign.⁵⁷

In 1997, Kool re-emerged on the music scene with a focus on rock music, partnering with the HORDE Festival, becoming an official sponsor of the 30 city rock tour.⁵⁸ Like Kool’s brief experiments with country and “Latin” music sponsorship in the 1970s, the HORDE Festival departed from the brand’s association with African-American music. In

1998 B&W initiated its “b kool,” campaign, and returned to African-American music events with “House of Menthol” promotions, including the Kool Mixx DJ competition, and Kool Mixx club nights.

Shifting from Jazz to Latin music to hard rock and eventually hip-hop may have caused fans that identify with specific genres to turn away from the brand. RJ Reynolds’s 1983 evaluation of Kool’s music activities highlights the difficulty of appealing to a large base of consumers through music:

Their market share is dropping precipitously. Our guess is that jazz, with its connotation of black ‘cool’ (hipness), has buried the brand within the black market. Through its association with a difficult category of music, it has been perceived as a ‘difficult’ product, one that is not for everyone. The Kool Jazz Festival vividly illustrates the risks of close association with a particular type of music. The obverse is also true: if one chooses, then, to associate with every kind of music, the marketing program risks becoming formless and meaningless.⁵⁹

B&W was not successful in its attempts to make Kool a brand with universal appeal. In fact, in the company’s search for a more universally appealing music campaign, they frequently switched the focus and the musical genre of their promotions, possibly alienating their core target, and diluting their established brand image.

The 2004 Kool Mixx campaign

The Kool Mixx promotional campaign was an extension of the annual Kool Mixx DJ competition that began in 1998⁶⁰ and expanded to include MC competitions and rap concerts.⁶¹ The Kool Mixx DJ competition received more attention in 2004 when B&W commissioned Bates USA to expand the contest nationally. The promotion included a series of limited edition cigarette packs featuring artist renditions of the



Figure 3 Kool “Mixx Stick” Radio promotional item and two special edition cigarette packs. The radio was offered for free with purchase of the two packs.

elements of hip-hop culture—MC-ing (rapping), DJ-ing, breakdancing, and graffiti art, and a “Mixx Stick” radio free with the purchase of a limited edition two-pack set (fig 3). The campaign also offered free magazine subscriptions for various hip-hop themed magazines including *Complex*, *Details*, *King*, *Oneworld* and *Vibe*.⁶²

The interactive Kool Mixx CD-ROM highlighted the integrated Kool Mixx promotional strategies. The CD included video clips of Kool Mixx events, interviews and performances from rappers, DJs, graffiti artists and dancers. The CD interface featured a cartoon image of a DJ on a set of turntables, with rappers and dancers in the background. Clicking any of the images launched video of Kool Mixx events and interviews with hip-hoppers. A small radio in the corner of the screen acted as a portal to various sections of the CD. The CD included “Mixx” branded desktop wallpaper to be downloaded to the user’s computer, three “test your hip-hop skills” interactive games, a selection of audio tracks, and DJ software allowing the user to create original music mixes.

In 2004 B&W also returned to the 1970s Kool Jazz Festival strategy with the Kool Nu Jazz Festivals, a four city concert tour featuring contemporary hip-hop and soul artists such as Erykah Badu, the Roots, George Clinton, Jill Scott, Reuben Studdard, and Big Boi of Outkast.⁶³

In the spring of 2004, Attorney Generals from Maine, New York, Maryland, and Illinois filed separate motions citing four primary violations of the MSA: (1) the prohibition on youth targeting; (2) the prohibition on payments related to tobacco products and the media; (3) the ban on brand name merchandise; and (4) the prohibition of brand name sponsorship of concerts.¹ The states argued that the Kool Mixx cigarette packs, retail displays, CD-ROMs and website were violations of the MSA’s prohibition on youth targeting; that the CD-ROMs, Kool Mixx toll-free telephone number and website were violations of the provision against tobacco products in the media; the cigarette packs, pocket-radios, and “Mixx- Soundtrack to the Streets Goody Bags” that were distributed at Kool Mixx events were violations of the ban on brand name merchandise; and that live and replayed broadcasts of Kool Mixx events on the website and telephone hotline constituted violations of the prohibition of brand name sponsorship of concerts because the broadcasts offered the concert beyond the limits of “adult-only facilities” as required by the MSA.¹

DISCUSSION

The music marketing strategies behind the Kool Mixx campaign have been in development for three decades. This strategy has not been uniformly successful for the brand. In fact, based on the market share data one could conclude that after its initial success with targeted music marketing to the African-American community, B&W failed in most of its subsequent music campaigns, especially while experimenting with various genres and promotions. Recently, possibly because of a return to their roots in African-American music, B&W found some “success” in increased market share with the Kool Mixx campaign. The history of Kool reflected in these internal documents helps to explain why some Kool music campaigns succeeded or failed in the past, and highlights which aspects of the 2004 “Kool Mixx” campaign should be of concern to tobacco control efforts. These issues include—but are not limited to—the use of music to appeal to youth; the campaign also comprises a return to a brand image consistent with Kool’s history, illustrates continued targeting of the African-American community, a more powerful integrated marketing campaign strategy, and the potential to retain its core audience and gain more universal appeal.

Consistent brand identity and promotional execution is key to a brand’s success.⁶⁴ Kool’s first shift in core identity away from a medicinal product was likely necessary as menthols became positioned as every day cigarettes. However, Kool continued to shift gears repeatedly, at times emphasising its strong menthol flavour and at others highlighting Kool Milds, sometimes focusing on African-American smokers and sometimes appealing to white smokers (Kool Biker). The 2004 “Kool Mixx” campaign addressed the lack of consistency in B&W’s music campaigns of the 1980s and 1990s. The 2004 Kool Mixx campaign was potentially a more powerful marketing vehicle than some of the previous Kool music campaigns because it was consistent with Kool’s historic core identity as a strong menthol cigarette for predominantly African-American young adult males.

The targeting of African-American smokers is problematic and should continue to be challenged as African-Americans bear a disproportionate burden of tobacco related disease compared to other racial and ethnic groups.^{65 66} Kool’s history and success among African-American smokers illustrates the role of music in targeted marketing. Since the 1960s, B&W sought out increasing ways to target African-Americans,¹¹ and the association with music was used to reinforce the brand’s appeal to African-American smokers. In subsequent years, as B&W shifted music marketing strategies, they may have alienated African-American smokers and confused consumers from all demographics.²⁴ Kool’s various attempts at marketing to other audiences had limited appeal and were abandoned shortly after initiation. Only after Kool returned to aggressive targeting of African-American smokers through the “House of Menthol” music themed promotions in 2000 did Kool begin to regain market share, increasing each year until 2003.^{67 68}

Kool’s recent Kool Mixx campaign is the latest manifestation of a proven formula for B&W—using music (in this case hip-hop) as the unifying element in an integrated promotion campaign aimed at young African-American smokers. The 2004 Kool Mixx campaign takes advantage of multiple channels including contests and special events, print advertising, pack advertising, interactive CD-ROM, website, bar and club promotions, magazine subscriptions, and branded merchandise (in the form of a pocket sized radio). The legality of the promotional items under the terms of the MSA has been questioned. Compared to the historic Kool music campaigns, the Kool Mixx campaign represents B&W’s most well developed integrated marketing music campaign to date. The increased interactivity of promotions (such as the CD-ROM allowing the user to create their own music mixes) provides many more opportunities to build increased involvement with the Kool brand. These strategies represent the most contemporary example of B&W’s stated intent to use integrated marketing campaigns to circumvent advertising restrictions.⁴⁴ Integrated marketing campaigns require particular attention as they have been used to circumvent stringent advertising restrictions, such as those in Australia⁶⁹ and in Canada.⁷⁰

The transformation of rap music from underground African-American and Puerto Rican to mainstream popular music has taken place in a context of increasing commercialisation of the music and its artists. Marketing tobacco through hip hop is a part of broader trend in which “fast food, athletic wear, cars, clothing and even food storage ads have used rap music and Hip Hop aesthetics to sell commodities”.⁷¹ The pervasiveness of hip-hop culture among youth has grown tremendously, affecting musical preferences, styles of dress and figures of speech.⁷² One survey reported that in 1996 almost 60% of suburban consumers from 12–20 years of age “like” or “strongly like” rap music.⁷² As a reflection of these trends, rap music stars enjoy



Figure 4 Cigarette art piece parody of Kool from 1997. Reproduced with permission of the artist, Refa-One.

widespread popularity as role models and trendsetters for music, fashion, and social behaviour.⁷³ Hip-hop likely appeared to Kool marketers as somewhat of a saviour. Previous Kool music manifestations remained confined by the limited fan base of each musical genre. Hip-hop reflected an entire cultural movement prevalent to not just youth but young adults worldwide. Given the globalisation of hip hop culture and its new place “at the center of a global capitalist process”,⁷⁴ and the history of tobacco companies exporting effective young adult marketing strategies,⁷⁵ the tobacco control community should be prepared to encounter increasing hip-hop themed promotions aimed at young people worldwide. Music promotions are but one example of tobacco industry efforts to promote smoking utilising popular culture channels, including sports,^{76–78} movies,^{79–81} and parties at bars and clubs,^{82–85} both in the USA and abroad.^{84–85} The objectives B&W expressed in using music to promote Kool may also apply to other branded sponsorship and lifestyle marketing efforts.

After years of experimentation, B&W may have finally settled upon music that appeals to their core constituency of African-American smokers while also appealing broadly to young adult smokers. A more sophisticated understanding of hip-hop culture and its history may allow tobacco control advocates to work within the culture to reach its constituents and counter the effects of corporate advertising. Cigarette packages featuring graffiti-like images of the four elements of hip-hop might be accepted as an authentic part of the culture, but they may also be viewed with scepticism or outrage if recognised as the co-optation of hip-hop culture to serve the commercial interests of the manufacturer of a deadly and destructive product. In a similar fashion to “adbusting”, tobacco control advocates should “hijack” the methods used by the industry to reach young adults and use hip-hop to both expose the tobacco industry and the dangers of smoking.⁸⁶ Members of the hip-hop community have already taken a stance against tobacco and specifically Kool. The “godfather of hip-hop”, Afrika Bambaata, protested outside the 2004 Kool Mixx DJ Championship event, spoke out publicly against the use of hip-hop to promote cigarettes, and called for a boycott of Kool, claiming “Your body is your

What this paper adds

While tobacco industry sponsorship of musical events has been documented, few studies address how music campaigns are designed to sell cigarettes, or why tobacco companies seek music sponsorship opportunities. This case study of Brown & Williamson Tobacco Company’s Kool brand uses internal documents to describe how and why music was used to advertise and promote Kool historically, how these principles were used to plan a global music campaign, and their presence in the 2004 Kool Mixx campaign in the USA. A broader understanding of this process can inform tobacco control efforts addressing tobacco sponsorship of music and other lifestyle events.

first temple, your first mosque, your first church. We’ve got to respect what goes in our bodies.”⁸⁷ Voices from inside the community, such as Bambaataa and Oakland graffiti artist Refa-One, who distributes artistic parodies of tobacco ads, should be encouraged (fig 4).

The calls to boycott Kool and the ultimate recall of the Kool Mixx promotion demonstrate successes that can be achieved when hip-hop and public health communities work together. These efforts are part of a history of effective cooperation between community activists, tobacco control advocates, and the public health community to challenge the effects of menthol products in the African-American community. The success of the NAATPN and others in mobilising against the 2004 Kool Mixx campaign follows in the tradition of the Coalition Against Uptown that mobilised a broad community-based response against the menthol brand Uptown (RJ Reynolds) in 1990.^{88–89} Efforts should continue to challenge the target marketing of the tobacco industry. An understanding of tobacco company marketing activities and their rationale coupled with strong community mobilisation can be used to break what may be perceived to be “natural” associations between tobacco and popular culture. This strategy may be useful in other efforts to counter tobacco industry colonisation of popular culture vehicles like movies, television programming, music videos, and sports. Today, an added understanding of hip-hop language, trends and culture is necessary to communicate effectively with a broad cross-section of youth and young adults. Engaging the hip-hop community in tobacco control efforts may allow a more proactive and comprehensive response to future tobacco music promotions.

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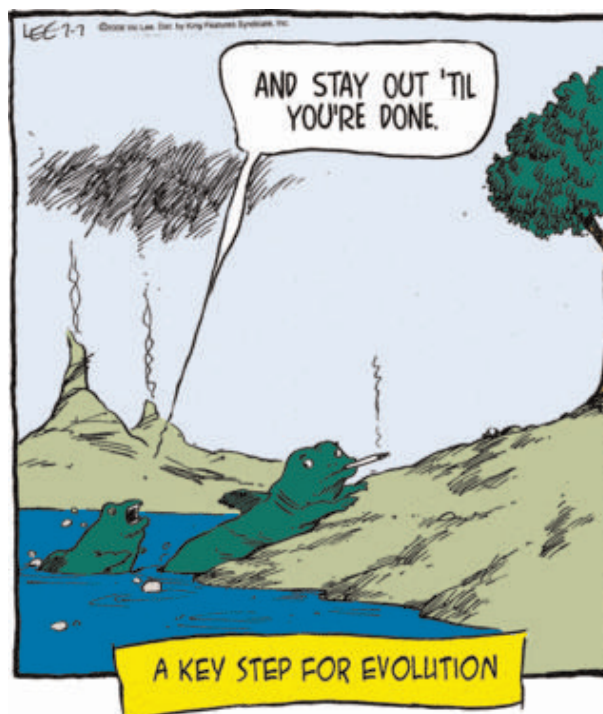
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The Lighter Side



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