



Online Marketing of Tobacco Product in Indonesia

Situation Report (September-November 2024)



Background

Article 13 of the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) recommends banning all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (TAPS) across all channels. Online platforms, which are more difficult to oversee than traditional media channels, pose a significant challenge to controlling and curbing tobacco marketing. Vital Strategies' Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement (TERM) is a digital media monitoring and reporting system that tracks tobacco marketing on social media platforms and news sites with widest circulation in each country. This situation report is part of a series that summarizes observed examples of online tobacco marketing in Indonesia. TERM does not allege or attempt to identify whether these tobacco marketing instances are in violation of local or international laws. Visit the [TERM](#) website to learn more and to view all reports.

Definitions used in this report

Volumes: Total number of mentions (posts, including reposts/retweets).

Views: Online audiences' interactions in the conversations; Likes, comments, Views, Shares for a post online.

Interactions: Interactions are broadly defined as audience communication on a social post. Interactions are platform-specific, meaning that each social platform has its own unique interaction data. Twitter interactions include Likes, Replies, and Retweets against a Tweet. Facebook interactions include Likes and Reactions, Comments, Shares and Views against a Facebook Post. Instagram interactions include Likes and Comments against an Instagram Post. YouTube interactions include Likes and Dislikes, Comments and Views against a video.

Interactions + views (total): The total number of social interactions, including likes, dislikes, reactions, retweets, comments, replies and shares. The number of views is included when available.

Estimated reach or potential impression: Total number of people who were potentially exposed to the mentions.

Influencers/Influential Voices – The most *influential and frequent authors and social pages that have generated, shared or have been mentioned within the conversation. * Influence measured by followers, interactions (Likes, comments, Views, Share for a post online) around the mentions, and potential reach of the mentions

Executive Summary

Tobacco companies in Indonesia are deploying a range of strategies to counter growing regulatory pressure, emphasizing their economic role and ties to local communities. Industry players have highlighted support for farmers, small businesses, and community development initiatives, and have appeared to mobilize tobacco farmers in opposition to proposed regulations. Digital platforms—especially visual-based social media—were key channels for tobacco promotion. Community-based marketing was the most prevalent approach, often led by accounts linked to cigarette brands.

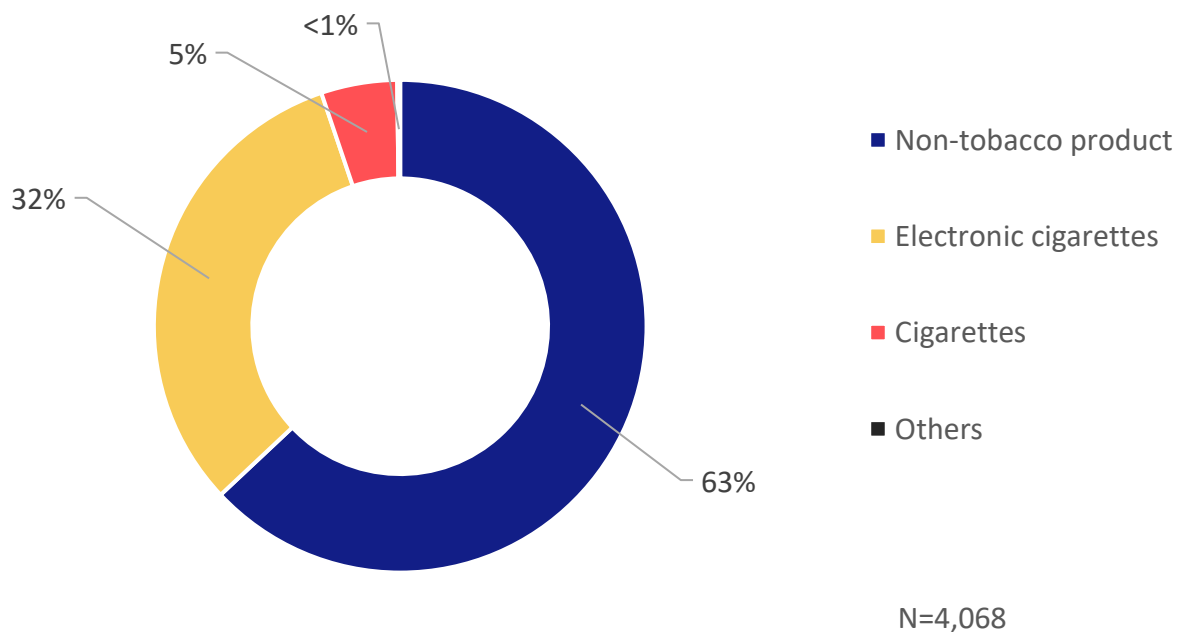
Messaging focused on entertainment themes and product features, frequently showcased through local events and the promotion of alternative tobacco products. Marketing activity was dominated by non-tobacco items and electronic cigarettes, driven by community engagement and direct marketing strategies, respectively.

- Tobacco companies in Indonesia, including major players such as HM Sampoerna and PT Djarum, are reinforcing their public messaging around economic and social contributions amid mounting regulatory scrutiny. Industry campaigns have emphasized support for tobacco farmers, micro and small enterprises (MSMEs), and community development, while mobilizing farmer groups to align with their stance on tobacco control measures.
- Social media remains a core channel for promotion. Instagram (64%) and X, formerly Twitter (13%), accounted for over 70% of all online tobacco-related posts, followed by Facebook (11%). The dominance of visual-first platforms suggests a strategic focus on imagery and video to amplify brand presence. TikTok and YouTube each captured 5%, while news sites contributed 2% of the content share.
- Community-based marketing represented 60% of activity, led by brand-affiliated initiatives such as PB Djarum, DCDC, Boldriders, and Comfortzone. Direct advertising made up 25%, primarily tied to electronic cigarette brands including Voopoo, Rincoe, and Uwell, and supported by third-party retailers like Fakir Liquid and Vape Tasikmalaya.
- Messaging trends centered on entertainment (62%) and product features (24%), leveraging sports, music, and adventure-themed events to enhance visibility. Informational and social welfare content (8%) was used to defend industry operations and position the companies as responsible actors.
- Non-tobacco products, driven largely by community-based branding efforts, accounted for 63% of marketing content. Electronic cigarettes followed at 32%, buoyed by targeted direct marketing from both manufacturers and retailers.

Detailed Insights

What tobacco categories are most actively marketed? Community-based marketing activity was the primary driver behind non-tobacco products' dominance in the observed marketing posts, accounting for 63% of the total (Figure 1). Electronic cigarettes (32%) followed as the second most marketed category, largely influenced by electronic cigarette brands and third-party retailer activity. Cigarettes (including Kretek) and cigars (5%) had a smaller volume of marketing.

Figure 1
Distribution of Total Posts by Tobacco Type

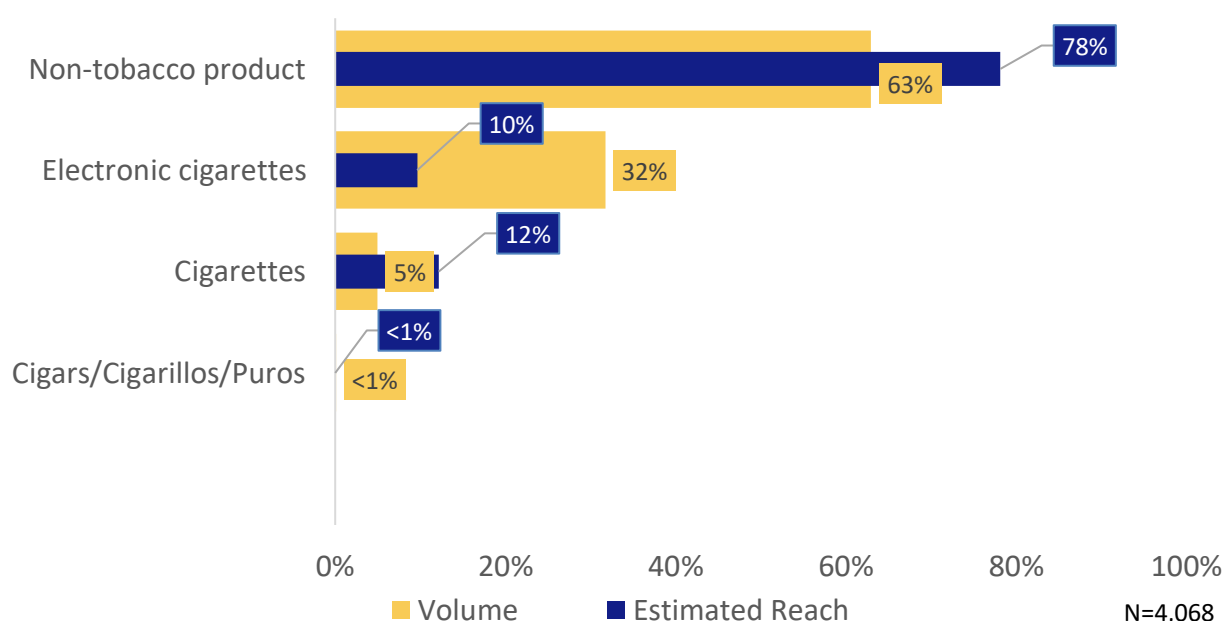


Base: 4,068 total posts, Indonesia (Sept – Nov 2024)

What is the marketing reach by product type? Indonesia's digital tobacco marketing remains dominated by non-tobacco products (that are affiliated with cigarette brands), which comprised 63% of total promotional content and reached an estimated 78% of the potential audience, according to platform data (Figure 2). Electronic cigarettes accounted for 32% of marketing volume but reached just 10% of the audience.

In contrast, cigarettes and cigars represented only 5% of the marketing volume, yet captured 12% of estimated reach. The data suggest that although less frequently promoted, cigarette-related content is more efficiently targeted than that of electronic cigarette sellers.

Figure 2
Estimated Reach by Type of Product Marketing: 936 million



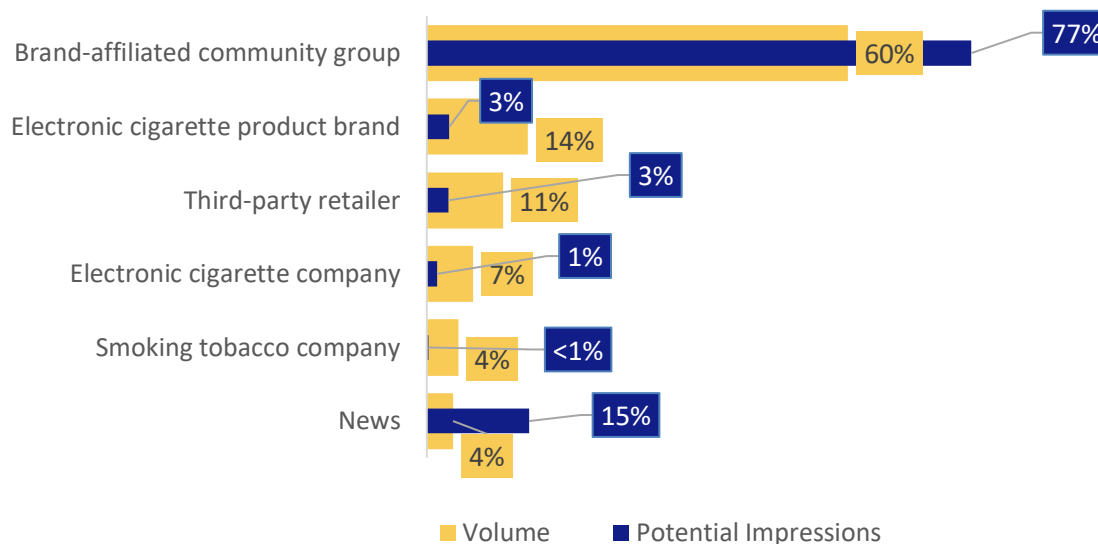
Base: 4,068 total posts & 936 million estimated reach, Indonesia (Sept - Nov 2024)

Note: Estimated reach (also called potential impressions) is an estimate of the actual number of audiences presumed to have been reached by the message. This is automatically calculated by the Synthesio system using the number of account followers/subscribers. The system assumes all the followers of those accounts have seen the message.

What entities are most active in tobacco marketing? Brand-affiliated community groups are the most dominant actors in Indonesia's online tobacco marketing landscape, accounting for 60% of total marketing volume and an estimated 77% of audience reach (Figure 3). Electronic cigarette brands (14%) and third-party retailers (11%) followed in volume but each reached only 3% of the potential audience.

News outlets, while contributing just 4% of marketing activity, achieved a disproportionate share of reach at 15%. This was driven by the high visibility of platforms such as *Kontan*, *Neraca*, *Tribunnews*, *Kompas*, and *CNBC Indonesia* (Figure 3).

Figure 3
Estimated Reach by Type of Accounts: 936 million



Base: 4,068 total posts & 936 million Potential Impressions, Indonesia (Sept - Nov 2024)

Note: Estimated reach (also called potential impressions) is an estimate of the actual number of audiences presumed to have been reached by the message. This is automatically calculated by the Synthesio system using the number of account followers/subscribers. The system assumes all the followers of those accounts have seen the message.

Key Highlight: Tobacco companies in Indonesia continue to boost brand visibility through community-based marketing while using general public relations and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives to justify their operations amid evolving regulatory pressures.

Non-tobacco: Community-based marketing accounts for the highest share of tobacco-related promotional activity, comprising 63% of observed content. These efforts are closely linked to major manufacturers such as PT Djarum and PT Wismilak.

Brands have expanded their visibility by embedding themselves in entertainment, lifestyle, sports, and adventure-themed initiatives. These platforms are used to subtly reinforce tobacco brand identities while aligning with themes of camaraderie and youth culture.

Electronic cigarettes: Direct advertisements make up the majority of electronic cigarette marketing, accounting for 78% of related posts. These promotions focus heavily on product features, with brands such as Voopoo, Rincoe, and Uwell—alongside third-party retailers—highlighting new arrivals and collections of vaping devices and accessories.

Commonly used hashtags including #vaping, #eliquid, #vapor, and #vapestore are employed to boost visibility and engage online audiences.

Cigarettes: Amid tightening regulations, tobacco companies in Indonesia are increasingly using public relations and corporate social responsibility (CSR) messaging to underscore their economic and social contributions. These campaigns emphasize support for farmers and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), tax contributions, and community welfare programs.

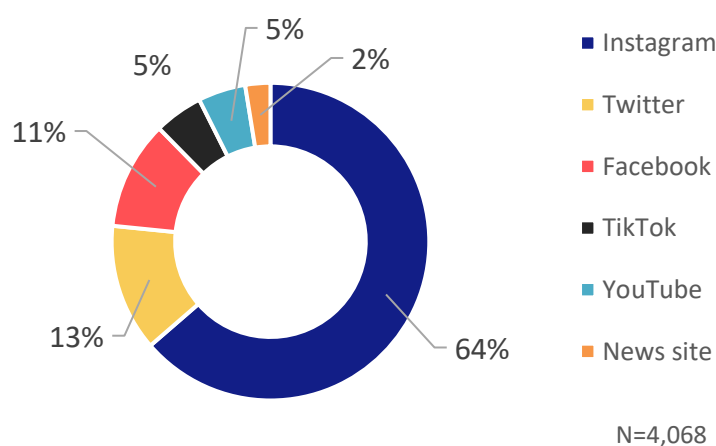
Framed as efforts to counter what the industry views as excessive regulation, these narratives aim to position tobacco companies as vital to economic stability. In several instances, tobacco farmers have been mobilized to publicly support this stance.

Cigars: PT. Taru Martani highlighted its efforts to empower farmers and support distribution networks in recent public communications, aligning with broader industry narratives emphasizing economic contributions and community engagement.

Where was the marketing observed? Online tobacco marketing is concentrated on Instagram, which accounts for 64% of total marketing-related posts (Figure 4). The platform's visual-first format aligns with the industry's preference for imagery and video to enhance brand visibility. Twitter, now rebranded as X, follows with 13%, serving as a key channel for news-sharing and viral engagement around tobacco-related content. Facebook ranks third at 11%, maintaining its place within the marketing mix.

Emerging platforms TikTok and YouTube each represent 5% of activity. In contrast, news websites make up just 2% of posts but are strategically used to spotlight tobacco companies' economic contributions, social welfare programs, and corporate social responsibility efforts.

Figure 4
Distribution of Posts by Platform

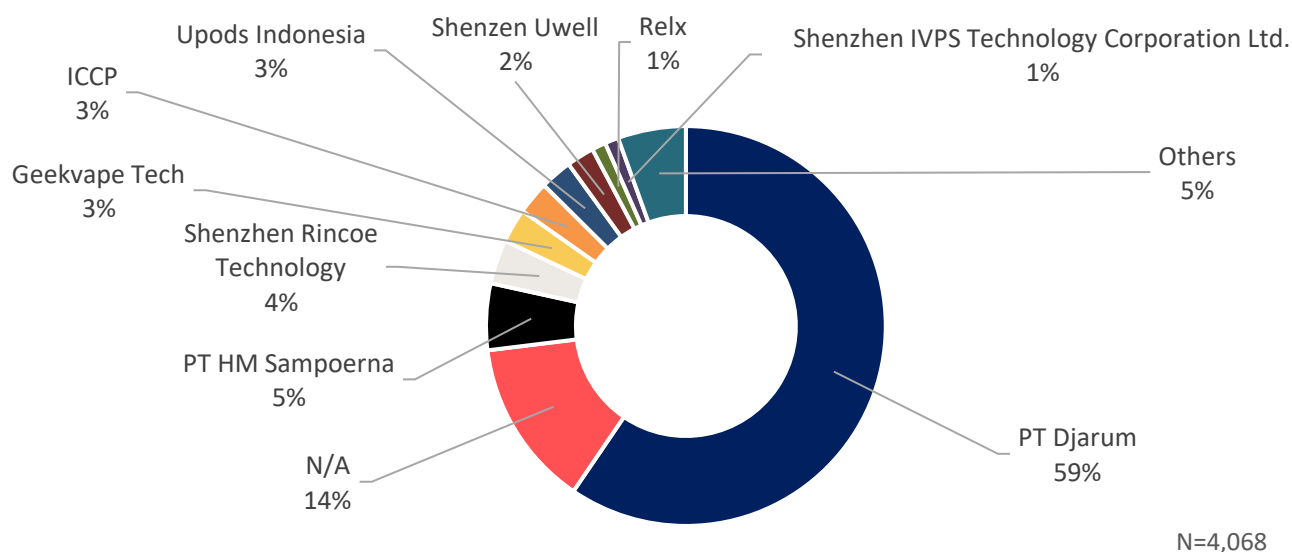


Base: 4,068 total posts, Indonesia (Sept – Nov 2024)

Who are the key players? Online tobacco marketing is heavily driven by PT Djarum, which accounts for 59% of total marketing volume (Figure 5) followed by PT HM Sampoerna (5%).

Electronic cigarette companies also feature prominently. Among the most active are Shenzhen Rincoe Technology [Rincoe] (4%), Geekvape Tech (3%), ICCPP [Voopoo] (3%), Upods (3%), Shenzhen Uwell (2%), Relx (1%), and Shenzhen IVPS Technology Corporation Ltd. [Smok] (1%) (Figure 5).

Figure 5
Total Posts by Tobacco Company



Base: 4,068 total posts, Indonesia (Sept – Nov 2024)

Note: NA posts are primarily posts that are about tobacco but do not feature any brand such as regulatory and health mentions, and Third-party retailers. Others include Lost Vape, Joiway, Voopoo, PMI, Oxva Indonesia, Shenzhen Relx Technology, GAP VAPE Technology, IQOS, Craving Vapor, PT. Taru Martani, PT Wismilak, PT Gudang Garam, BAT, SMOPI Indonesia, PT Sumatra, Chakra Cigars, JVS Group, PT Lampion, and Airscream UK.



Shenzhen IVPS Technology Corporation Ltd directly markets its new X-Priv Solo product, with a less obvious caption ("IF YOU DO NOT SMOKE, DO NOT VAPE") that fails to address the health concerns of electronic cigarettes.

Successfully Managing Communication Strategy, HMSP Wins This Award!

CNBC Indonesia
November 22, 2024 15:42



Photo: [Communication Strategist Awards event in Jakarta, Wednesday \(11/20/2024\) \(CNBC Indonesia/Faisal Rahman\)](#)

PT HM Sampoerna's Corporate and External Communication strategy earned an award at the Road to CNBC Indonesia Awards 2024 for effectively communicating sustainable investments that benefit Indonesia's economy. However, this overlooks the social and environmental harm caused by its tobacco products.

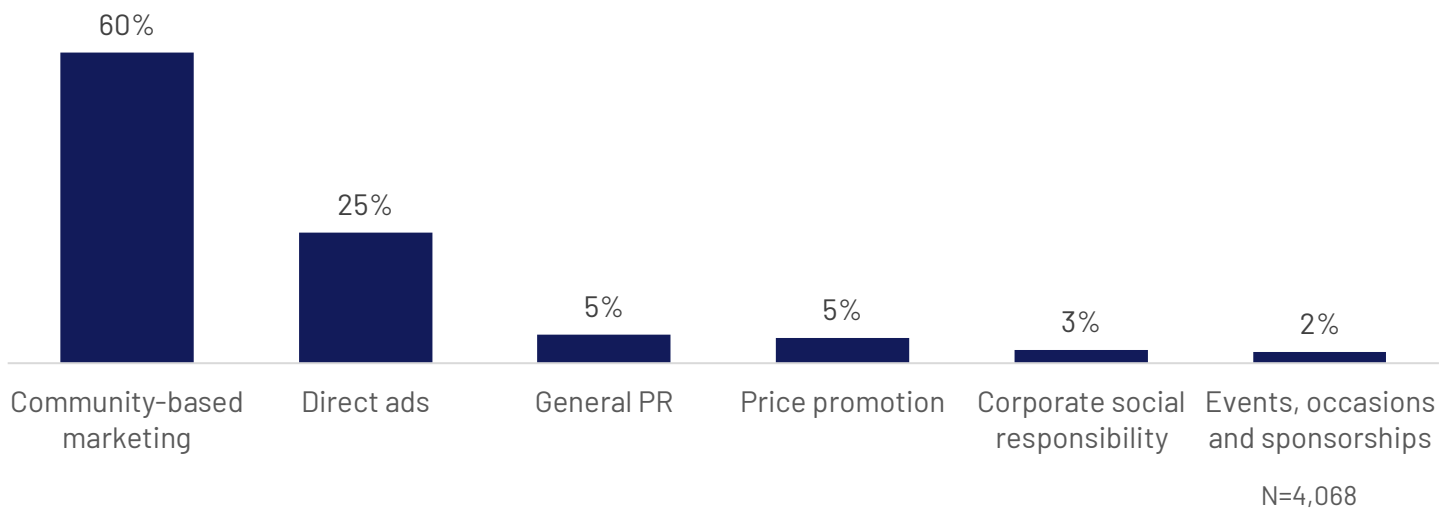


PB Djarum's community-based marketing around badminton builds solidarity with consumers by aligning with their interests.

What are the main marketing tactics used for tobacco products? Tobacco companies rely predominantly on community-based marketing and direct advertising, which together account for 85% of total promotional activity (Figure 6). Community-based marketing represents 60% of tactics used, while direct ads—largely promoting electronic cigarette products—make up 25%.

Other observed strategies include general PR (5%) and price promotions (5%), the latter commonly tied to electronic cigarette sales. General PR content typically highlights industry developments and corporate messaging. Corporate social responsibility initiatives and event sponsorships remain limited, comprising just 3% and 2% of activity, respectively (Figure 6).

Figure 6
Total Posts by Marketing Tactics

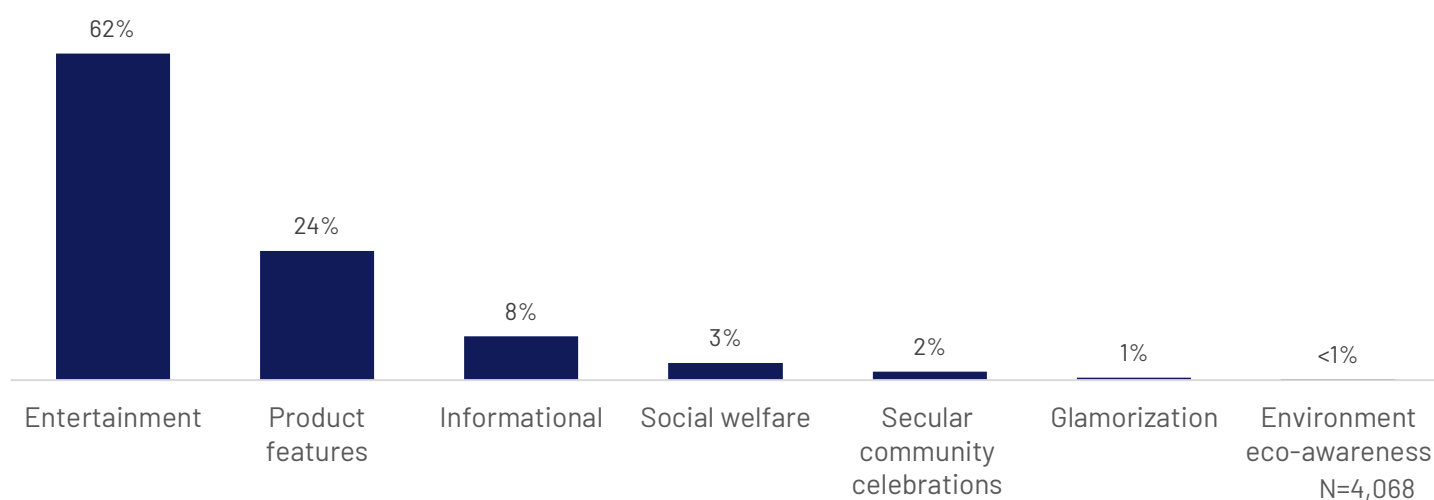


Base: 4,068 total posts, Indonesia (Sept – Nov 2024)

What are the main message framing used for tobacco products? The tobacco industry's marketing messages are predominantly framed around entertainment, which makes up 62% of the total marketing volume (Figure 7). This approach is closely associated with the prevalence of community-based marketing by brands such as PT Djarum, reflecting the industry's continued leveraging of entertainment, lifestyle, sports, and adventure and camaraderie themes to enhance brand visibility.

Product features (24%) follow as the second most prominent framing strategy, primarily employed in the electronic cigarettes category to attract potential consumers by highlighting the attributes and benefits of the products. Informational messaging (8%) is strategically aligned with elevating the economic and social (3%) contributions of tobacco companies to counter regulatory concerns and maintain a positive public perception (Figure 7).

Figure 7
Total Posts by Message Framing



Base: 4,068 total posts, Indonesia (Sept – Nov 2024)

Message Hashtags

What were the most frequently used hashtags? Word clouds generated from tobacco-related social media posts between September and November 2024 reveal the most frequently used hashtags in online marketing content. The visuals indicate that larger words correspond to more common usage across platforms.

A wide range of hashtags reflects the industry's multi-pronged approach to brand visibility and consumer engagement. Lifestyle-oriented tags such as #VapeSambas, #VapePontianak, and #VapeZoo were used to build regional identity and community among electronic cigarette users. More general hashtags like #Vapor and #Vape were aimed at broadening awareness and normalizing e-cigarette consumption.

Tobacco-linked entities also capitalized on badminton's national popularity, employing hashtags such as #PBDjarum, #PBDjarumOfficial, #BadmintonIndonesia, and #BadmintonClub. These tags were used to associate brands with national pride and sporting culture. Additionally, motivational hashtags including #TeruskanSemangatJuara and #TeruskanSemangatBersama reinforced themes of perseverance and teamwork, further embedding brand narratives into emotionally resonant public discourse.

The strategic use of these hashtags underscores the industry's efforts to align its messaging with widely held social values and popular interests.

Figure 8
Top Hashtags Used by Tobacco Related Accounts



Base: top 50 hashtags with highest frequency within the total posts, Indonesia (Sept – Nov 2024)

Examples of Marketing Tactics

Corporate Social Responsibility



PT HM Sampoerna's "Rise Together, Create New Opportunities" initiative aims to support entrepreneurs affected by layoffs due to economic challenges.

General PR

Indonesia Threatened with Losing IDR 308 Trillion from Standardizing Cigarette Packaging



A PR article from the tobacco industry pushes back against regulations that seek to standardize cigarette packaging, claiming the policy could result in a loss of Rp308 trillion. The industry continues to downplay the harm of smoking, emphasizing its economic contribution to Indonesia.



Community-based marketing

PB Djarum supports badminton talent in Indonesia, while Bold Riders, an adventure club, celebrates its 10th anniversary. Both accounts are affiliated with PT Djarum, a kretek cigarette manufacturer.

Examples of Message Framing



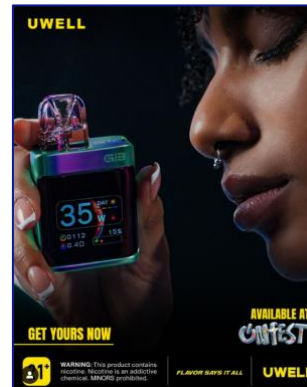
Entertainment

The post celebrates events in the Sports arena related to PB Djarum which is affiliated to cigarette manufacturer PT Djarum. This approach might seek to improve brand image by linking the company to popular interests and values in Indonesian society.



Informational

Information is being provided by the electronic cigarette brand Upods to its community of electronic cigarette users, encouraging them to vote in local executive elections. This effort is likely driven by considerations of tobacco regulations and aims to influence voters to prioritize their tobacco product consumption as a factor when electing leaders who will support the industry.



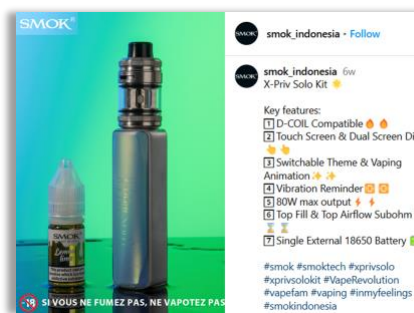
Glamorization

Imagery designed to attract young and sophisticated consumers is being used by Uwell, positioning the product as cool and glamorous.



Environment eco-awareness

Sampoerna positioned as being an environmental conscious company as its efforts in reducing production process waste and reducing non-hazardous and toxic waste are recognized.



Product features

The post highlights the product features of the Smok electronic cigarette, such as the screen visibility, its inbuilt digital features, and the longevity of its battery and ease of use.

This strategy is aimed at users who are looking for specific product qualities to enhance their experience.



Secular community celebrations

Geekvape electronic cigarette brand celebrated Heroes' Day with their consumer community. This framing is aimed at building solidarity and resonating with consumers.



Social Welfare

Tobacco companies elevate their programs which are designed to economically and socially support the communities in regions where tobacco is cultivated or is the main economic activity. This positions the companies as being socially responsible.

Based on observed news articles, regulatory pressure is being faced by tobacco companies, including HM Sampoerna and the larger tobacco industry, while their support for farmers, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), economic contributions, and community engagement is being highlighted to counter these concerns. Tobacco farmers have also seemingly been rallied by the companies to support their view on tobacco regulations.

Successfully Managing Communication Strategy, HMSP Wins This Award!

CNBC Indonesia
November 22, 2024 15:42



Photo: Head of External Affairs of PT HM Sampoerna Tbk, Asif Toichie when receiving an award at the Communication Strategy Awards event in Jakarta, Wednesday (20/11/2024). (CNBC Indonesia/Asif Toichie)

HM Sampoerna positioned as a socially responsible corporate.

The company is recognized for maintaining its reputation and committing to sustainability for all stakeholders. Through its Three Hands Philosophy, the application of science and technology is encouraged to drive the transformation of tobacco industry export markets. The article elevates the reputation of the company to counter regulatory pressures.



Tobacco partnering with farmers to provide training and social welfare.

Tobacco companies like HM Sampoerna highlight their social welfare programs with tobacco farmers by profiling farmers who have been successful through the companies' programs. This likely positions the company as socially responsible in the tobacco industry to counter or downplay the harm caused by the industry.

Making New History, Taru Martani Iris Tobacco Exports to Japan

English: Nanning Wijayanti
Friday, October 11, 2024 - 10:02 WIB



Highlighting the economic success of tobacco brands.

The industry is positioned as achieving achievements in the global market as Taru Martani successfully exported sliced tobacco with a distinctive Indonesian flavor to Japan, a market known for being selective about tobacco products.

Tobacco Workers Reject Plain Packaging Without Brands

Author: Wawan Satrio Dharma
10/10/2024 - 17:09 WIB



Leading the Industry: The Best Flavored Cigarette Manufacturing Company in India

Written by: Raju Dharma
10/10/2024 - 17:09 WIB

In the ever-evolving tobacco industry, flavored cigarettes have carved a niche among smokers who seek variety, smoothness, and distinct flavors in their smoking experience. For many, flavored cigarettes offer an enjoyable alternative, appealing to both seasoned and occasional smokers. Regarding flavored cigarette manufacturing in India, Gudrey Philip India Limited emerges as a front-runner, standing out as the best flavored cigarette manufacturing company. Known for its commitment to quality and innovation, Gudrey Philip has established itself as a trusted name in India and internationally.

Rallying tobacco farmers to support tobacco companies' objections to regulations.

The industry encouraging solidarity amongst its stakeholders to influence authorities to reconsider proposed tobacco products regulations.

Appendix Table 1. Definitions for Marketing Tactics and Message Framing Identified

Marketing tactic	Type of marketing strategy used, which captures the intention of the marketing (to sell products, create brand endearment/loyalty, etc.)
Brand extension	A separate brand of non-tobacco items that are produced by tobacco companies/conglomerates. The products may use the trademark logo or the name of the parent tobacco company. These products do not show any features that indicate association with any tobacco products.
Community-based marketing	Promotes the sale or use of tobacco products indirectly by creating brand connection to a specific community or subculture. (e.g. Photography enthusiasts, electronic music lovers).
Corporate social responsibility	Pairs the company/brand or product with socially responsible activities (e.g., water conservation projects, financing vaccination drives).
Direct ads	Promotes the sale or use of tobacco products in a straightforward manner; shows images of the product.
Events, occasions, sponsorships	Pairs the company/brand or tobacco product with events, occasions, sponsorships and contests (e.g., product sponsorship of sports events, live concerts, holiday greetings).
General PR	Intended to raise the profile of the brand/company but does not fall into any of the other categories (e.g., brand/company wishing a happy new year).
Price promotions	Promotes the sale or use of tobacco products and new nicotine and tobacco products through price discounting (e.g., 10% off).
Message Framing	Underlying theme around which the whole message of the post is built.
Entertainment	Posts that promote the product as being entertaining and fun. This category also includes posts that use entertainment-related content including memes, funny videos or jokes.
Environment eco-awareness	Any post that addresses climate change, conservation, sustainable development goals, or encouraging people to support environmental causes.
Glamorization	Posts that associate use of products as aspirational, luxurious or part of an ideal, fashionable lifestyle.
Health claims	Posts that present the product as healthier than other products or as being less harmful than conventional tobacco products.
Informational	Posts that instruct viewers how to use a product. This category also includes posts that provide background information on the company.
Personal care and wellness	Posts that associate products with relaxation or stress management. This category also includes posts that frame products as being used for social bonding, including forming community around use of the product with like-minded peers.
Product features	Posts that primarily emphasize the available choices of product flavors and design including device colors, as well as technical specifications of the product. Posts without any text descriptions or keywords that only display the product are also included in this category.
Religious event or imagery	Posts that feature religious imagery or celebrate religious festivals and events.
Secular community celebrations	Posts that offer celebrations or greetings for non-religious social and sporting events that are celebrated globally or nationally. This category also includes content celebrating achievements or honoring the memory of those who passed away.
Social welfare	Posts that showcase activities sponsored or supported by company/brand that are meant to improve their public image. Any posts associating the company with social welfare schemes, livelihood initiatives, women's empowerment, entrepreneurship, educational scholarships, etc.

Methods

The Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement (TERM) is a digital media monitoring and reporting system that is AI-supported and human expertise-driven that tracks tobacco marketing on social media platforms and news sites. The primary purpose of TERM is to identify instances of tobacco marketing, a known public health risk. TERM does not allege or attempt to identify whether these tobacco marketing instances are in violation of local or international laws.

This report summarizes information gathered by an artificial intelligence-driven monitoring tool from publicly available posts on social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and TikTok, and from online articles on news sites. Instances of tobacco marketing on social media are identified using keyword-based queries and through the regular monitoring of social media accounts that were identified purposively via input from tobacco control experts, market research data and keyword searches. News articles are identified by tracking the top 20 newspapers based on circulation in English and the commonly spoken language in each country through their social media accounts, RSS feeds and Google Alerts and via LexisNexis if behind a paywall. Data coding is first conducted automatically and is then reviewed by Vital Strategies researchers using a theory-driven codebook.

The analysis is currently restricted to content in English and Indonesian. Data restrictions and privacy laws followed by social media platforms may lead to undercounting of marketing activity. The platform does not track targeted paid ads, peer-to-peer marketing, or marketing in private groups.

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About the Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement

Vital Strategies' Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement (TERM) is a digital media monitoring system that tracks tobacco marketing online on social media platforms and news sites. TERM is currently operating in India, Indonesia and Mexico.

About Vital Strategies

Vital Strategies is a global health organization that believes every person should be protected by equitable and effective public health systems. We partner with governments, communities and organizations to reimagine public health, and the result is millions of people living longer, healthier lives. Our goal is to build a future where better health is supported across all facets of our lives, in our families, communities, in our environment and our governments.

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