

OUR VIEWS AND CURRENT PRACTICE

Risks of smoking and consumer information

- We believe that people should look to - and listen to - public health agencies as the prime source of information about the health risks of using tobacco. There is universal awareness that smoking is risky, not least because health agencies have successfully communicated the risks.
- We openly state that, put simply, smoking is a cause of certain serious diseases. We acknowledge that this is the most appropriate viewpoint for consumers and public health authorities. It has also for many years been the working hypothesis for much of our Research and Development work that has sought product modifications that might address the risks of smoking. We believe that all smoking is associated with some risk and that the best way to avoid a smoking related risk is not to smoke. We also believe that there is no such thing as a 'safe' cigarette.
- We accept the popular understanding today that smoking is addictive, meaning that consumers find smoking pleasurable but can find it hard to quit, despite knowing that it poses risks to health. But we also believe it is important that smokers realise they can quit, given the necessary motivation and self-belief.
- Our business is not about persuading people to smoke. It is about offering quality brands to adults who have already taken the decision to smoke. We strongly believe that smoking should only be for adults who are aware of the risks.
- We believe that an informed adult decision to enjoy the pleasures of smoking, while balancing the pleasures against the risks, deserves to be treated like many other lifestyle choices that we all make. However, we agree with the public health community that the health impact of smoking should be reduced and we are committed to working with others to try to do that.
- We believe that consumers are entitled to relevant information about the tobacco products on offer to them, particularly information about the health risks related to the products. We believe that governments should play a central role in deciding on and providing such information, while tobacco companies should help by providing relevant information and reinforcing government messages through health warnings on all packs and advertising.
- It is our policy that Group companies put a health warning on every pack they sell everywhere in the world, whether or not we

are required to do so by law. However, we believe that very large warning statements and images on packs are disproportionate and that warnings should not seek to destroy intellectual property rights.

- We support discussion about product ingredients other than tobacco with national governments and have disclosed substantial information to governments about the ingredients we add to our cigarette brands. For example, our submission of 28 February 2000 to the House of Commons Health Committee Inquiry, published on our website, lists the ingredients of all brand manufactured by British American Tobacco companies and sold in the UK.

Public smoking

- We acknowledge that Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) can be a real annoyance and may be of concern to some non-smokers and smokers.
- In our view there is no convincing evidence that ETS is a cause of chronic diseases such as lung cancer. However, we believe there are many occasions, such as when around infants and young children, where common sense dictates no smoking, and we believe that smokers should give due consideration to people who suffer from respiratory problems such as asthma.
- We are not in favour of draconian bans on public smoking and believe that governments, public health bodies, the tobacco industry and businesses in other sectors where people wish to smoke can work together on practical solutions to ETS. We support initiatives in various countries that aim to accommodate the needs of both smokers and non-smokers in public settings. Examples include the AIR (*Atmosphere Improves Results*) campaign in the UK and the *Courtesy of Choice* with international hotel chains.
- We believe that the sensible and practical way forward is through voluntary approaches that encourage non-smoking areas to be provided in public venues, supported by good ventilation. We will continue to support initiatives that aim to reduce exposure to ETS for non-smokers, while balancing the rights of smokers.

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