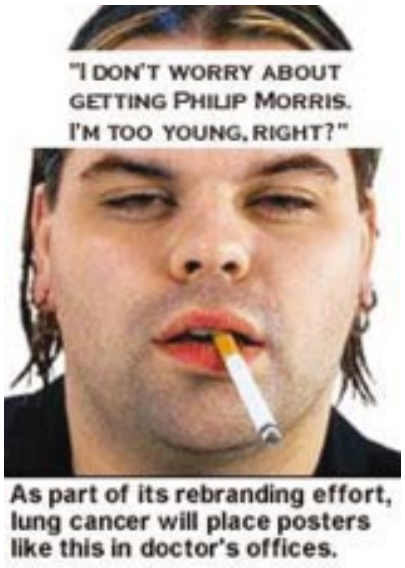

An ersatz poster spoofing the name change of Philip Morris.

corporate citizen, among other indicators of favourable public opinion."

My public health colleagues are intrigued with the new name, some suggesting it is an anagram of "A Trial". What we have here is a nomen nudum, a name without a proper description. Altria is a faux Latin word that echoes "altus", meaning height. The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary offers a closer sound match: altricial, from Latin and French, meaning to nourish, refers to a class of birds helpless at birth, and too young to forage for themselves—quite apposite when the company's internal documents about its potential customers as young as 12 are considered. PM has used the rather military veni, vidi, vici as part of its company symbol for years. I came, I saw, I conquered is probably a good description of their intentions, although venenum in auro bibitur (poison drunk from a golden cup) or graviora manent (the worst is yet to come) could be considered in the new-found clean spirit.

The key to the proposed switch may derive from the way the new name will be pronounced. If it's to be a US southern accented Altria—"I'll try a . . ."—then stand by for "I'll try a Marlboro" (or an Alpine, or a Kraft cheese sandwich).

The Satire.com website had a field day with the name change: "Just days after Philip Morris declared it will change its name to the Altria Group, lung cancer today announced it will change its name to Philip Morris. According to lung cancer officials, the chance to snap up a brand that is more widely associated with lung cancer than lung cancer itself was too enticing to pass up . . . For a time, patients will have to get used to hearing 'We suspect you have Philip Morris' instead of 'We suspect you have lung cancer'. But in terms of comprehension, I think they will instantly understand what they're being told." An ersatz poster has the following caption: "I don't worry about getting Philip Morris. I'm too young, right?"

SIMON CHAPMAN, with contributions from ANNE LANDMAN, STAN SHATENSTEIN, BERT HIRSCHORN, and STEVE HAMMAN

India: BAT's bravery award

As we know, one of the basic principles of tobacco promotion is to address the subconscious fears of the target audience: smokers, and potential "starters", as tobacco companies so cynically refer to our children. Some of these fears are rather banal—for example, that our breath, hair and clothes will smell bad if we smoke—and can be addressed by the association of cigarettes with concepts diametrically opposite on any scale of values, such as fresh mountain air and fragrant, beautiful models. Other fears, of course, are about the much more serious health problems caused by smoking, hence the value to tobacco manufacturers of associating smoking with sports and other tough, physical activities at which only fit and healthy people can excel.

But how else can we be reassured about well founded fear? Most nonsmokers are fearful about the risks of smoking, and timid about trying it, and at some level almost all smokers are deeply afraid of the consequences of their habit, and about continuing to ignore the overwhelming medical, economic, and social pressures to quit. One obvious way for tobacco companies to address such fears is to link smoking with bravery, a concept that must have been discussed between the tobacco industry and government health officials in several countries, as it has been specifically proscribed in some of the discredited "voluntary agreements" signed by numerous foolish or naive governments in the past.

In the UK, for example, the agreement regulating print and billboard tobacco advertising in the 1980s stated that advertisements should not suggest that smoking was "a manifestation of courage or daring". Of course, the whole point about these schemes is that the tobacco companies only agree to what they know they can easily circumvent by other means; thus Mr Aleardo Buzzi, the PM executive responsible for Marlboro's Formula 1 motor racing operations, told an advertising journal in 1983: "What we wanted was to promote a particular image of adventure, of courage, of virility."

In South Africa, Rembrandt, now subsumed into BAT, used a surf rescue helicopter with a huge assortment of ground backup vehicles, all plastered with its John Rolfe cigarette brand identifiers, to capture the attention of child-rich crowds at seaside holiday resorts, until it was grounded by the country's new tobacco control legislation (*Tobacco Control* 1998;**7**:9 and 1999;**8**:363–4). Earlier, Rothmans had used a similar device in New Zealand

Red and White cigarette ads disguised as advertisements for a national bravery award.

for its Winfield brand. Both rescue helicopters exploited a perfect blend of bravery, life saving, and excitement, achieving three major tobacco advertising deceptions simultaneously.

For the last decade in India, PM's Red and White cigarette brand has pulled no punches in an audacious, all bravery promotional scheme. Red and White cigarette ads disguised as advertisements for a national bravery award last year boasted that since 1990, the awards scheme "has honoured the true heroes of society. Ordinary citizens who have performed extraordinary deeds of physical courage and supreme selflessness." They went on to say that past winners included "saviours of people's lives and property. And organisations battling social evils such as dowry, child marriage and environmental pollution." The ads ended with an appeal for nominations (with a coy implication that people might consider nominating themselves) in two categories: physical bravery, and social acts of courage. Prizes ranged from a bronze medal plus around US$100 to a gold medal and US$300.

To complete the association of the brand with bravery, PM ensures that publicity for the programme positions the brand and the company as brave, too, by championing some of the most controversial and stubbornly tenacious remnants of India's ancient culture. Dowry payments made by parents under contracts for the marriage of their daughters have long plunged some of the very poorest families into apparently impossible, never ending debt or servitude. Some arch traditionalists and small time money lenders must resist the idea of ending the system as vehemently as PM resists an end to tobacco promotion.

Yet this is consistent with PM's careful casting of itself as the good guy in similar social struggles all over the world—for example, as benefactor to groups fighting hunger and poverty, HIV, and the deprivation of minorities. Surely its public relations team must already be drafting plans to sponsor women's emancipation programmes in post-war Afghanistan?

Niger: beauty and the beast

While much attention is given, deservedly, to the expansionist tactics in the developing world of the big three tobacco transnationals—Philip, BAT, and Japan Tobacco—several smaller tobacco companies are busily emulating them. In Niger, as in other French speaking west African countries, the dominant tobacco company since colonial times has been Seita, the former French tobacco monopoly now merged into Altadis along with its Spanish counterpart Tabacalera.

Capitalising on Letka (The Flock), a highly successful 1960s film mixing cartoon and human characters that is still remembered by Czech movie goers, the slogan on this Czech tobacco ad says: "The legend returns!". The brand is made by the Czech company Tabak. Any detailed interpretation of the ad's imagery may best be left to practitioners of the psychoanalytic traditions for which middle Europe is famous.

Last year's Miss Niger beauty contest demonstrates how the new, smaller tobacco companies can give the big boys a run for their money when it comes to saturation brand coverage in the youth market. The contest was sponsored by Fine cigarettes, manufactured by Seita/Altadis and distributed by Sitab Niger. The wife of Niger's President attended, together with the tourism minister and, significantly for this highly fashion and music conscious nation, a clutch of famous clothes designers and musicians. The event attracted droves of young people and gained extensive television and newspaper coverage. Attractive young women distributed Fine cigarettes, T shirts, caps and bags.

Traditional wrestling, the most popular sport in Niger, is sponsored by Fine cigarettes, which are manufactured by Seita/Altadis.

The Miss Niger beauty contest is also sponsored by Fine.

Fine also sponsors a biennial international festival of African fashion. Fine's sister brand Excellence sponsors the National Youth Festival, a cultural and sports event attended by more than 3000 young people, and traditional wresting, the most popular sport in Niger, which is covered live on television. Even the courtyard of Niger's parliament carries a Sitab cigarette brand advertisement.

It is not hard to envisage the odds stacked against any politician or government official who might try to ban tobacco promotion in Niger: just imagine finding yourself accidentally dropped into the ring at the Fine national wrestling contest.

Thailand: trying to swing it on the golf course

Even in countries with the strongest tobacco control laws, tobacco companies will always explore whether they can get away with breaking or getting round them. So it was that last October Thai health workers were informed that a large group of sportsmen from Malaysia were participating in a golf tournament sponsored by Japan Tobacco's Mild Seven cigarette brand, and that in breach of Thailand's strict tobacco ad ban, a substantial amount of promotional material had been set up at the Royal Gems golf course outside Bangkok. Banners were in place at the course, in front of the lodge, in the dining area and elsewhere, all proclaiming the tournament as "All Golfers' Mild Seven Astro Masters" (Astro was another sponsor), together with the sponsors' logos.

By the time health officials reached the course next morning, however, pieces of paper had been pasted over the banners to obliterate the name and