



Building Grassroots Social Movements:

Lessons from the Tobacco Wars

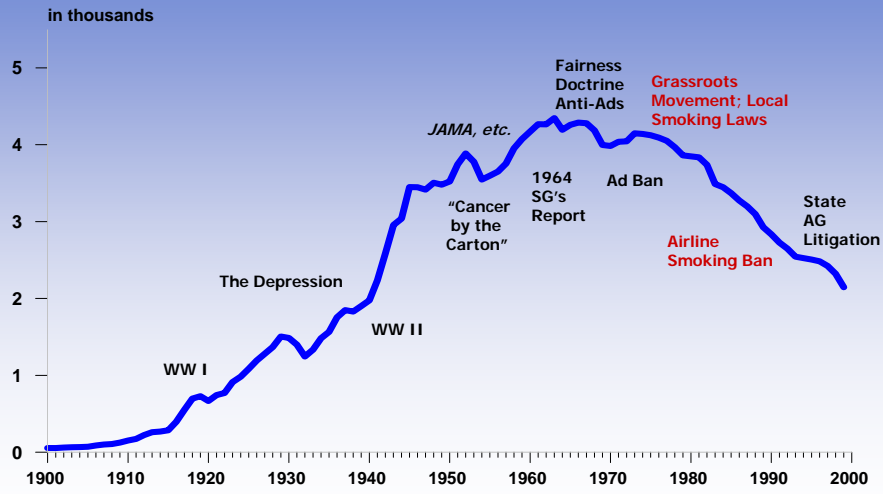
Mark Pertschuk

Past President and Executive Director
Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights

Natural Connections: Tipping Points to Cultural Change

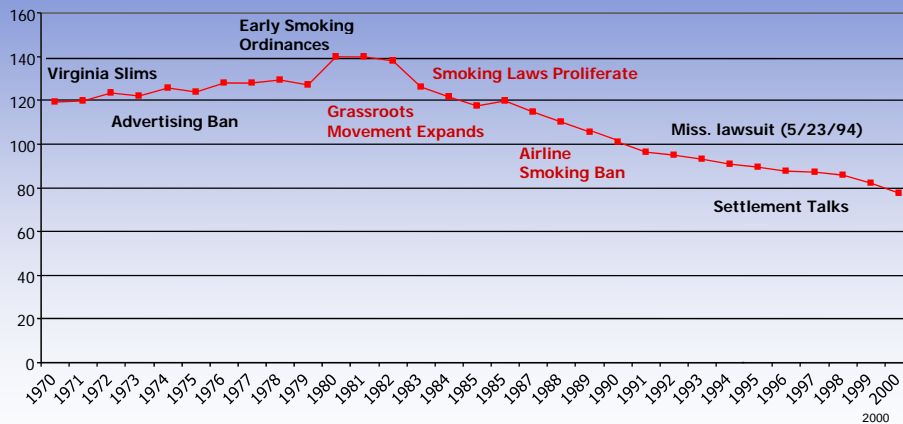
C&NN's Grassroots Gathering
September 17 – 19, 2008
Nebraska City, Nebraska

Cigarette consumption and major events affecting trends – 1900 - 2000



Sources: Don Shopland; *Ashes to Ashes*

Cigarette consumption and tobacco control campaigns – 1970 - 2000



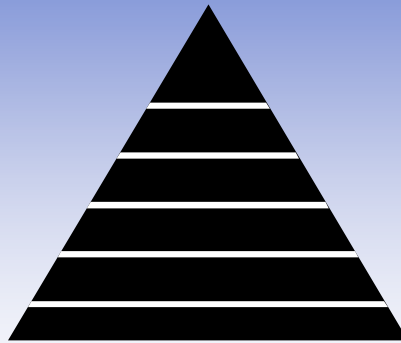
Sources: Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids; *The Tax Burden on Tobacco*

Lessons From the Tobacco Wars

1. The Grassroots Paradigm
 - Movement building
 - Grassroots strategy
2. The Public Health Approach
 - Changing policies
 - Changing environments
 - Policy and social norms
3. Countering Harm-causing Industries
 - Industry as “vector of disease”

The Grassroots Paradigm

Federal Policy
National Media
State Policy
Local Policy
State and Local Media
Citizen Engagement



Bottom UP, *not* top down

Building an Effective Movement

- The Responsive Cord: A movement “picks” its own issues and goals
- Effective communication among and between national, state and local levels
- Collaboration and specialization
- Grassroots, not *Astroturf*

Grassroots Strategy

- Coordinated grassroots pressure: Smart goals aligned with tactics and activities
- National leaders connected with grassroots base
- Collaborative lobbying
- **Stepwise vs. incremental**



Lessons for Movement Building

- The art and science of social change: Channeling grassroots energy into smart citizen movements for real progress
- Changing physical and social environments through media and policy advocacy: policy change propels social norms change

Policy and Social Norms

- Norms and policies are interdependent and mutually supportive
- Even if “unsuccessful,” the *campaign* for health policy change (e.g., a smoking ordinance) can itself educate and change social norms
- The changing physical and social environment: Smoking becomes socially unacceptable, reducing youth smoking and addiction

Tobacco Control's Effective Prevention Strategies

- From individual focus to environmental prevention

Downstream

Upstream

Individual change

Community change

Damaging norms

Changing "normal"

- Increasing excise tax increases prevention resources

WHAT SHAPES ALCOHOL PROBLEMS *in your* COMMUNITY?

• **COMMUNITY NORMS**



Social expectations and acceptance of heavy consumption encourage binge drinking and other alcohol-related problems.

• **MEDIA MESSAGES**



Advertising and other media messages often glamorize excessive drinking, especially among young people, and ignore the consequences.

• **ACCESS and AVAILABILITY**

Alcohol that's cheap, easy-to-get and available everywhere is linked to drinking, underage drinking, and many other problems.



• **POLICY and ENFORCEMENT**

Public and private policies and enforcement steps have not been fully implemented or enforced, and are not being fully enforced.

