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The Campaign: Political, Program, and Public Benefits

A discussion paper prepared by
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We will address the No. 1 killer in Ontario with an aggressive plan to reduce smoking. We will make cigarettes more expensive (by \$10 per carton) to prevent kids from lighting up. We will ban countertop and behind-the-counter retail displays of tobacco products. We will make all public and work places in Ontario 100% smoke free within three years. Health is a provincial responsibility, so we will take the onus off municipal governments.

Ontario Liberal Party

[Mr. Speaker, as] you know, during the last election we made a commitment to make Ontarians the healthiest Canadians.

Hon. George Smitherman



The Campaign:
Political, Public, and Program Benefits

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The Campaign: Political, Program, and Public Benefits

INTRODUCTION

Suzanne worked as a bartender for more than 20 years and was exposed to second-hand smoke every day. Now, she suffers from an irreversible lung disease. Every day she fights for breath. Even playing with her kids is a struggle. I'm thinking of Suzanne today, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. George Smitherman

Today, in Ontario, the tobacco industry claimed the lives of another 44 people. It convinced another 155 young people to smoke their first cigarette. It recruited more smokers to fight for “smokers’ rights” and to oppose the Ontario government’s “smoker denormalization” campaign. It mobilized sympathetic surrogates – tobacco farmers, convenience store operators, and legislators from tobacco regions – to delay, diminish, and discredit life-saving, government anti-tobacco legislation, policies, and campaigns. Today, the tobacco industry, once again, maintained its profitability and share value, and its capacity to fight governments and their ministers who want to save lives. The tobacco industry’s campaign is working.

There is agreement that a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign is needed if the Government of Ontario and the Honourable George Smitherman (“Minister”), Minister of Health and Long Term Care, hope to fight and defeat the tobacco industry and achieve the best outcomes for Ontarians’ health protection and quality of life. The Minister has on numerous occasions expressed this position – most recently at the 31 May 2005 spending announcement at Princess Margaret Hospital. Dr. Sheela Basrur, Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy Minister of the Public Health Division, has reiterated the Minister’s view. Others who advise the Minister and Dr. Basrur have offered campaign proposals. The Minister implicitly re-emphasized the importance of a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign when he established his Campaign Cabinet.

A *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign is *not* necessary if the government's goal is merely to reduce the per capita consumption of tobacco. Tobacco tax increases and the elimination of smoking in work and public places will have that effect. Reducing prevalence – the number of people who smoke – is another matter. While a reduction in per capita cigarette consumption is a good indicator of smoking behaviour, it is a poor goal. A 20% per capita reduction in the number of cigarettes smoked can be achieved with little or no decline in the number of people smoking, and would have no measurable effect on suffering and deaths. Indeed, a 20% decline in per capita consumption could be achieved even if the number of smokers increased. To reduce the harm caused by smoking, the goal must be to reduce the number of people who smoke. To achieve the maximum possible reduction in prevalence, a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign, in the absence of an effective federal campaign, will be necessary. This is particularly true if the government hopes to reduce the prevalence of smoking among young people.

While it is generally agreed that a campaign is necessary, what is not generally agreed is what, in fact, a campaign is. At a meeting of the Community Action Working Group (CAWG), a co-ordinating management committee of *Smoke Free Ontario*, a participant grappling with what the Minister meant at the May 31st spending announcement by “campaign” suggested that *Smoke Free Ontario* already had one, namely its protection, prevention, and cessation programs. These involve Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (“MHLTC”) staff and consultants, various old and new government structures, Members of Provincial Parliament (“MPP”), numerous non-governmental organizations (“NGO”), and the current communications strategy. While these elements could be integral to a campaign, they do not – as currently implemented – constitute a campaign.

The purpose of this paper is threefold: one, to inform the discussion about a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign; two, to help those now involved in *Smoke Free Ontario* to consider their activities in a campaign context; and three, to assist the Minister, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and the Campaign Cabinet in making decisions about a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign. This paper will:

- define “campaign”
- outline the fundamental components of a campaign
- show how current protection, prevention, and cessation programs and communications elements would benefit from a campaign

- explain the political implications and benefits of *Smoke Free Ontario* for the anti-smoking campaigns of Ontario's NGOs
- summarize the political, program, and public benefits of a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign
- "blue sky" some campaign ideas.

The campaign experience of those involved in *Smoke Free Ontario* range from none to extensive. Therefore, to be as useful as possible to the largest number of people – people who may be called upon to plan and implement a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign – this discussion paper assumes that the reader is not well-acquainted with campaigns.

In order to encourage a far-reaching discussion about the *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign, this paper also assumes that all campaign possibilities are available to the government and that the government has chosen to implement the best campaign possible. In fact, however, these assumptions are not valid because broader political, policy, budget, and legal considerations will constrain the government's *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign options. Nevertheless, the government can enjoy the benefits of everything suggested in this paper – and more – by making common cause with the many NGOs that are active in the larger provincial, national, and international fight to prevent the suffering and deaths caused by the tobacco industry and its products.

Developing a comprehensive, long-range campaign plan would neither be difficult nor overly time-consuming – thanks to the experience and knowledge of governments, NGOs, and individuals in Canada, the U.S. and the European Union – but for the Ontario plan to have practical value it would require the close participation of the many people, governmental and non-governmental, now involved in formulating and implementing *Smoke Free Ontario* public policies, programs, and communications strategies. Also, a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign, like all campaigns, can only be a part, not independent, of a broader *Smoke Free Ontario* strategy. At present, that strategy, and the legislation that supports it, is limited to prevention, protection, and cessation program development and implementation.

WHAT IS A CAMPAIGN?

I'm delighted that the overwhelming majority of Ontarians support what we are doing. Ontarians want us to move forward on the issue of tobacco control, and we are doing just that.

Hon. George Smitherman

A campaign is best understood as an argument – one that includes not only communication, but also practical elements. In an election campaign, a candidate argues that voters should elect him or her. In a marketing campaign, a company argues that consumers should buy its product. In an advocacy campaign, a non-governmental organization argues that the government-of-the-day should adopt a particular policy. In a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign, someone (it is not yet decided who) will argue that Ontario should be “smoke free.”

Like all arguments, a campaign has four fundamental components. Ranked in their order of importance to winning, they are:

1. Audience(s)
2. Credible leaders who evoke the public's empathy
3. Emotions
4. Facts and practical elements.

Mindful of these fundamental, necessary, and mutually-reinforcing components, it becomes clear that the campaign notion raised at the CAWG meeting discussed above was incomplete, relying entirely on the “facts and practical elements” of *Smoke Free Ontario*. That campaign notion did not include the absolute necessity to identify the audiences, to enhance the credibility of and the public's empathy for the people who will make the *Smoke Free Ontario* argument, nor the crucial need to evoke relevant emotions in smokers and, more importantly, in non-smokers.

Given the above, it is likely apparent to the reader that the tobacco industry's campaign to prolong smoking and increase its profits is employing the four campaign components effectively and successfully. The tobacco industry is politically organizing smokers and those who financially benefit from the tobacco industry like convenience store operators. It is acquiring new smokers,

particularly the young. And, it is reacquiring those who have quit. It is doing all this with the following tactics: using ostensibly credible and empathetic spokespeople like Nancy Daigneault, the president of the tobacco industry-funded mychoice.ca; evoking emotion with its spirited defence of the artificially created “smokers’ rights,” and defending smokers from the Ontario government’s “denormalization of smokers” campaign (to use Daigneault’s words); and stipulating its own facts. The tobacco industry’s campaign is smoke and mirrors, but it creates the perception – and perception is reality in politics – that the pro-tobacco community is more politically and electorally relevant than it actually is. Though erroneous, this perception is having the desired effect: slowing the pace and scope of federal and provincial government tobacco control policies. The tobacco industry’s campaign is so effective, due in part to the absence of a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign, that while *Smoke Free Ontario* may successfully reduce the per capita consumption of cigarettes due to tax increases and a reduction in smoking venues, it will – in its current manifestation – have only minimal effect on the prevalence of smoking and likely no effect on the tobacco industry’s profits, longevity, and capacity to addict and harm generations to come.

The tobacco industry’s campaign must be not just neutralized, but rendered a liability. This is the only way to achieve maximum health and quality of life benefits for the people of Ontario, and maximum political and public support for *Smoke Free Ontario*, for its leaders, and for future tobacco control initiatives. To date, the tobacco industry has been able to attack and organize against the government, its *Smoke Free Ontario* policies, and government officials like the Minister with impunity. The failure of the government to respond decisively, passionately, and forcefully against the tobacco industry’s attacks lends credibility to the tobacco industry’s campaign and false assertions, which in turn enhances its political, promotional, and marketing efforts. It is not enough for the government to leave counterattacks to NGOs. To do so creates two perceptions in the public mind: one, since the government does not respond, it must not take the issue as seriously as it claims; and two, there must be truth in what the tobacco industry is charging. The nagging unanswered question left in people’s minds is: with so many lives at stake, why would anyone allow a supposed lie to go unchallenged, unless it were true?

If it is to achieve its goals, a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign, likely in common cause with others, will need to counter the industry’s “*Smoke Ontario*” campaign. Just as a campaign can be understood as an argument, a counter-campaign – or negative campaign – is best understood as a counter-argument or

rebuttal. And, just as the four fundamental components listed above are essential to a campaign, their opposites are essential to a counter-campaign. A successful counter-campaign against the tobacco industry would entail, in order of importance:

1. Facts and arguments – proving that those used by the tobacco industry are false and fallacious
2. Evoking emotion – against the tobacco industry and what it does
3. Leaders' credibility and the public's empathy – undermining them in the tobacco industry's spokespeople and surrogates
4. Audience(s) – targeting who the tobacco industry needs to influence.

Note that the ranking of importance of the four components in a counter-campaign is the opposite of that in a campaign.

A *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign will be necessary if the government's policy objective is to reduce the number of smokers; persuade people, particularly young people, not to start; and convince young people to quit – something that is generally accepted by *Smoke Free Ontario* personnel as very difficult, but that has been accomplished in other jurisdictions with campaigns against the tobacco industry.

Unlike many issues, *Smoke Free Ontario* has all the components necessary to create the "Perfect Storm" of campaigns to "target the scourge that is tobacco," to use the words of Premier McGuinty.

THE CAMPAIGN COMPONENTS

... this isn't about numbers; it's not about dollars. It's about improving lives, and it is about saving lives. It's about keeping our families together.

Hon. George Smitherman

Each of the four campaign components deserves to be considered in greater detail and, in particular, how a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign would employ them in both a positive campaign and an associated counter-campaign against the tobacco industry. In the best campaigns, all of these components are

present in all communications and activities either implicitly or explicitly. To simplify the discussion, each component will be dealt with separately, but it is important to appreciate that in the best campaigns they work in harmony and reinforce each other – the finest campaigns are far greater than the sum of their parts.

Audience(s)

The most important component in a campaign is the audience. Who is the advocate talking to and why? What does the advocate want the audience to feel and do? One of the reasons campaigns fail is that advocates fail to identify and understand all their audiences and make clear to themselves what they want of each audience. Campaigns often have a number of audiences. A *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign would have four. Ranked in order of importance to winning the “war” against the tobacco industry and its products and saving the lives of Ontarians, they are:

1. Anti-tobacco, anti-smoking advocates
2. Tobacco industry and smoking advocates
3. Non-smokers
4. Smokers

The anti-tobacco, anti-smoking advocates from within the government and the non-governmental community are the most important audience. They are the officers and foot soldiers in the war against the tobacco industry and its products. Without these advocates, *Smoke Free Ontario* fails. Many in this audience have been engaged in the tobacco wars for decades. They made Ontario’s public and work places 50% smoke free before the present Liberal government took up arms and introduced *Smoke Free Ontario* legislation, programs, and tens of millions of dollars in funding. *Smoke Free Ontario* is so comprehensive and so well-funded that it means the government has now, whether it intended to or not, assumed the general-ship in the war on tobacco in Ontario. Nevertheless, it falls to the people on the ground – governmental and non-governmental – to man the frontlines and make *Smoke Free Ontario* a success. Many of these people are young and volunteers. Others are experts and experienced hands. The quality of work that they will do and their level of commitment and determination will be influenced by the *Smoke Free Ontario*

campaign, particularly by *Smoke Free Ontario* leaders who can evoke in these people the emotional commitment they will need to press on and prevail. In return, the leadership can count on these advocates' hearts and minds, their hard work, and their expertise. They can also help the *Smoke Free Ontario* leadership decide how best to move forward and implement further public policy initiatives that will reduce the number of people who smoke and lead to a truly smoke free Ontario with all its health, quality of life, and economic benefits. Failure to retain the loyalty of these people because of a loss of faith in the *Smoke Free Ontario* leadership, or a diminution of emotional commitment, or a loss of confidence in the efficacy of *Smoke Free Ontario* programs will defeat the government's public policy objectives. Without the willing, enthusiastic support of anti-tobacco, anti-smoking advocates *Smoke Free Ontario* will fail.

The tobacco industry and smoking advocates are the second audience, and the enemy. They include the tobacco industry's executives and the campaign creators and managers who are working tirelessly – and successfully – to promote smoking and addict new customers, mostly young people. Also in this audience are groups like tobacco farmers, some MPPs, and convenience store operators – groups that the tobacco industry politically mobilizes, idealizes, and uses to evoke sympathy for itself that would not be otherwise forthcoming from legislators, media commentators, and the public. To succeed, a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign must engage this audience and disrupt its strategy to promote the tobacco industry's goals. Not only would this impair the tobacco industry's campaign and therefore its capacity to attract new smokers, particularly the young, but also it would enhance the credibility of and empathy for the *Smoke Free Ontario* leadership which would, in turn, increase the support and confidence of the anti-tobacco, anti-smoking advocates and the 80% of Ontarians who are non-smokers and who benefit most from *Smoke Free Ontario*.

Ontario's non-smokers – an 80% majority – are the third audience. They are the reason that *Smoke Free Ontario* is politically possible. Until non-smokers became the majority, the idea of *Smoke Free Ontario* was pure fantasy, an “extremist” absurdity. When the demographics of non-smokers are compared to smokers, it becomes apparent that non-smokers are more politically relevant than smokers. Non-smokers vote at a higher rate than smokers. Also, given their demographics, it is likely that on the political spectrum non-smokers tend to be more liberal than conservative. If the government-of-the-day hopes to maintain the political support it now enjoys, a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign must devote considerable resources to winning the “hearts and minds” of non-smokers. The campaign must emphasize how *Smoke Free Ontario* has increased, and can

continue to increase, the quality of their lives. In this way, the political environment will improve for elected officials who have the political courage and the will to lead on this issue, for more aggressive public policies that will further reduce the prevalence of smoking, and for undermining the campaign-created, artificial credibility of the tobacco industry and its proponents.

From a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign perspective, it is useful to remember that for non-smokers, the Ontario Liberal Party's tobacco strategy is far more than a health issue. It is a quality of life issue. As of May 2006, no longer will a non-smoker have to avoid a bistro on Church Street or a country and western music bar in Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey because of smoke-filled air. No longer will a non-smoker have to suffer the discomfort of riding in a company car with a smoker who thinks that keeping the window open is enough. No longer will a non-smoker have to avoid favourite restaurants after 9:00pm because they are accompanied by their children after attending a concert or a hockey game. Currently, *Smoke Free Ontario* tends to dwell on the health risks and economic costs of smoking, but for many voters who welcomed the Ontario Liberal Party's tobacco policies their support was likely due to the small, day-to-day quality of life issues and the tobacco industry's predation on their children. It is worth noting that, despite the critical political importance of non-smokers, the current *Smoke Free Ontario* communications strategy ignores them. This must change.

For the purposes of this discussion paper, "smokers" are defined as those people targeted by the tobacco industry as current and potential customers. Most potential new customers are young people, particularly those in less advantaged socio-economic populations, and former smokers at a risk of relapse. However, this oversimplifies the smoker audience which is composed of many types of people from all walks of life. Many of the people who now smoke express a desire to quit; most have tried. Some are incorrigible and cannot conceive of a life without cigarettes. Some, particularly the young and those who want to be "kool" like the movie stars are simply oblivious to the deadly consequences of smoking, preferring the comfortable satisfaction of the social, psychological, and nicotine addiction. For others, cigarettes – like any social drug – are one of the few desperate, occasional pleasures left to them by mental illness or poverty or despair.

Most *Smoke Free Ontario* expenditures and programs, and most of its mass communications budget, concentrate on the smoker audience. Smokers represent about 20% of Ontarians. Most did not contribute to the political environment that

made possible the Ontario Liberal Party's *Smoke Free Ontario* policy. It is this audience that the tobacco and smoking advocates are politically mobilizing to thwart *Smoke Free Ontario*, to undermine the credibility of the Minister and the Liberal government, and to prevent or delay the further policy initiatives needed to reduce smoking prevalence.

These are the tobacco industry's victims. These are the people who are suffering and dying. Some courts have recognized smokers as suffering from a disability. These people need our understanding, sympathy, and unstinting support: the same respect due any person with a disability or a debilitating disease. They do not need and will not respond to our opprobrium, however well-meaning or veiled. Should a smoker choose to quit, he or she should know that *Smoke Free Ontario* stands ready to help them – "When you're ready to quit, we're ready to help." A *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign that treats smokers with respect and compassion will do much to undermine the credibility of the tobacco industry's campaign. A *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign that demonstrates to smokers that there are politicians who will fight those who profit from their addiction and suffering will also undermine the tobacco industry.

Credible leaders who evoke the public's empathy

The advertising agency bumper sticker blares, "It's not the steak, it's the sizzle!" In a campaign, however, it's not the steak, and it's *not* the sizzle. It's the chef. A successful campaign requires prominent, credible leaders who evoke the public's empathy; in the absence of such leaders, a campaign will usually fail. This is a campaign axiom well-understood by politicians and political parties. Trusted *Smoke Free Ontario* leaders who have the empathy of the public will be able to fully engage and motivate their own advocates, intimidate the tobacco industry and its advocates, win and keep the political support of non-smokers, and earn the respect, albeit grudgingly at times, of most smokers. There is no better example of this phenomenon in the tobacco wars than Michael Moore, the Attorney General of Mississippi who spearheaded the successful litigations against the tobacco industry in the U.S. Because Moore was so credible and empathetic he acquired the personal public support he needed to command the political support necessary to proceed and win.

The importance of enhancing the credibility of the political leaders of *Smoke Free Ontario* and the empathy that the public has for them cannot be overstated. Making Ontario truly smoke free and substantially reducing the

prevalence of smoking will require continuing improvements in legislation and increased restraints on the tobacco industry's activities. This cannot be accomplished unless the politicians who bear the responsibility of promulgating the necessary policies have strong and broad support from voters. No doubt there will be cynical complaints that this critical component of a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign will serve political ambitions. The criticisms, should they materialize, can be managed. Indeed, they can be effortlessly turned against the critics and, in doing so, used to further enhance the leaders of *Smoke Free Ontario*.

The leaders of *Smoke Free Ontario*, particularly the Minister and Dr. Basrur, already enjoy much credibility and public empathy, but *Smoke Free Ontario* has neither taken full advantage of this nor implemented communications strategies to enhance the leadership's public support. At a CAWG meeting, the question, "Who is the spokesperson for *Smoke Free Ontario*?" was posed. After some hesitation and consideration, the tentative answer was, "I suppose it's the Minister." *Smoke Free Ontario* has a champion in Minister Smitherman, but his passion, courage, and charisma – indeed, his role as a leader and as the personification of *Smoke Free Ontario* – are not being fully utilized.

A campaign need not confine itself to one leader. Because the tobacco issue touches so many ministries, *Smoke Free Ontario* could benefit from the active participation of many leaders. A list of potential leaders in addition to Minister Smitherman and Dr. Basrur could include:

- Premier McGuinty, whose leadership made possible the *Smoke Free Ontario* policies of the Ontario Liberal Party.
- The Hon. Michael Bryant, Attorney General, whose ministry is participating in litigation against the tobacco industry.
- The Hon. Joseph Cordiano, Minister of Economic Development and Trade. *Smoke Free Ontario* will make Ontario a more productive and less costly place to do business.
- The Hon. Jim Bradley, Minister of Tourism. Because most people do not smoke, *Smoke Free Ontario* makes Ontario a more desirable tourist destination. Welcome to *Smoke Free Ontario*!
- The Hon. Sandra Pupatello, Minister of Community and Social Services. Smoking disproportionately hurts people who rely on Minister Pupatello

for assistance. *Smoke Free Ontario* programs are another way for the Minister to help those who rely on her.

- The Hon. Gerard Kennedy, Minister of Education. There is no better venue than schools for giving young people the truth about how the tobacco industry preys on them. And, only campaigns that expose the truth about the industry reduce the prevalence of youth smoking.

Each of these leaders could play an important role and, in doing so, would not only help the government achieve the objectives of *Smoke Free Ontario*, but also benefit his or her own ministry's goals.

Emotions

Thirty years ago, Joe Napolitan, the founder of the American Association of Political Consultants, wrote the obvious in *The Election Game and How to Win It*: "Elections are won and lost on emotion, not logic." The importance of emotion in politics and campaigns – like *Smoke Free Ontario* – has been well understood since before the time of Plato, who decried the dominance of emotions in human thinking as a failing. Marshall McLuhan did not go far enough when he said, "The medium is the message." The medium is emotion and emotion is the message. We are a feeling animal that thinks, not a thinking animal that feels.

People start smoking because of emotional wants. They want to appear like movie stars or other role models who move them. They want to be welcomed in their peer group of choice. They want to feel empowered by rebelling against authority or their parents. They want to calm their fears, their anxieties, their passions. All emotions. The tobacco industry depends on emotions. It depends on emotions to politically excite and mobilize smokers, convenience store operators, bar and restaurant owners, and tobacco farmers against the government, the Minister, and *Smoke Free Ontario*.

Just as emotions can be evoked to hook someone on cigarettes, so can they be evoked to free smokers from the tobacco industry, particularly the young who have yet to become heavily addicted and habituated. If a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign is to be effective, its leaders must use their campaign to evoke appropriate emotions in all four audiences listed above, and use those emotions to deliver *Smoke Free Ontario* messages.

So important is emotion in deciding people's beliefs and motivations that in the development of *Smoke Free Ontario* advertisements, web sites, earned media events, and even prosaic spending announcements, the overriding consideration should be the emotions that will be evoked. The most provocative and memorable statement made at the May 31st spending announcement at Princess Margaret Hospital was not made by the Minister, Dr. Basrur nor any of the medical guests who relied on lists of facts about death, suffering, health costs and the economy, but rather by the one person who evoked passionate emotion: youth advocate Michelle Tham. Launching an ardent, clearly-heartfelt attack on the tobacco industry for its predation on young people – who are not “stupid,” she said – Tham showed herself a skilled street fighter and a defender of her “friends,” the young people of Ontario. Michelle Tham is exactly the kind of leader we all want fighting for us no matter the cause. Tham used emotion to evoke empathy and credibility for herself and her cause. Her emotions delivered her message because they perfectly echoed and reinforced what she was saying about the tobacco industry and how she – and by extension “we” – will fight and defeat it.

Contrast what Tham did at the May 31 announcement with the television ads for stupid.ca, the *Smoke Free Ontario* youth web site. The stupid.ca television ads use slapstick-like humour to persuade young people not to start smoking because smoking is “stupid.” At the Tobacco Control Area Network (TCAN) Planning Day on July 7th, the stupid.ca ads were shown. They are clever, very well produced, and they evoked laughter. Because the ads evoked a pleasant emotion, with only a few exceptions, people seemed to think they were good. But, what does the emotion of humour say about *Smoke Free Ontario* and the government's view of smoking? What does humour say about the seriousness with which the government takes the smoking issue and the carnage wreaked by the tobacco industry? Would the Government of Ontario run humorous ads, like those for stupid.ca, about alcoholism, addiction to gambling, AIDS prevention, getting a flu shot, or avoiding breast cancer? Why should smoking, the number one cause of preventable death in Ontario, be a subject of humour? If humour is the emotion evoked by any *Smoke Free Ontario* ad then the message is that smoking and, by implication, smokers are funny, humorous, stupid, and fair game to be made the butts of jokes. The emotion is the message.

Apparently, stupid.ca ads tested well in focus groups. Too often focus groups are a campaign curse – a plague that displaces experience, creativity, and judgment for the spurious comfort of “it tested well” and an excuse if the ad fails. Focus group reliance often destroys any hope of airing either an effective ad

or an ad that will attract earned media. Indeed, in today's focus group environment, ad agencies can become prone to produce not the best ad, but ads that they hope will test well. Even more troubling, focus groups are no insurance against horrific error – particularly when humour is involved. The Progressive Conservative Party of Canada learned that lesson too late to save its life when, in 1993, it aired a political ad that tested well, but emphasized Prime Minister Chrétien's facial paralysis. Voters were appalled. What focus groups *are* good for is determining if an ad is clear and understandable.

Facts and practical elements

Of the four components that make up a campaign, the least important to winning is the facts and practical elements. Being the least important, however, does not mean *not* important. Quite the contrary. The best campaigns are built on a firm foundation of sound facts and solid practical elements. They are less important to a campaign only because few in the public have the time, expertise, or inclination to fully study and judge them. In order to judge the facts and practical elements raised in a campaign, people tend to trust leaders whom they believe are credible and with whom they empathize, and they rely on their “gut feel” – their emotions – about what they are being told.

Smoke Free Ontario has a firm foundation constructed from solid scientific evidence and the prevention, protection, and cessation programs that the Government of Ontario is funding and implementing. The facts underpinning *Smoke Free Ontario* have been proven by decades of research conducted around the world. The practical elements of *Smoke Free Ontario* are based on “best practices” determined by agencies as prestigious and respected as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. The tobacco industry, its proponents, and some smokers – for a range of self-serving reasons – will always dispute the facts and practical elements of *Smoke Free Ontario*. However, they are not disputed by the politically and electorally important audiences – non-smokers and anti-smoking advocates – nor by most media commentators.

Facts and practical elements: counter-campaign

Where the facts and practical elements component is most important is in a counter-campaign. Undermine the factual foundation of the propaganda that an opponent relies upon, and the opponent's edifice falls. If an opponent's facts

and practical elements are shown to be false or fallacious, their leaders' credibility is destroyed. Once that happens, little that they have to say, no matter how true, will be believed. This, in turn, reduces the empathy that important audiences feel for them. People resent being lied to or deliberately misled. The loss of credibility and empathy foments intense negative emotions about the opponent. And, when that occurs, the opponent's recovery is very difficult, usually impossible because the important campaign components – audience, credible leaders who evoke the public's empathy, and emotion – are lost.

The tobacco industry's campaign is built on a very poor, very vulnerable foundation. It is constructed not on facts, but on the sand of fallacious arguments: stipulated definitions, straw man arguments, specious arguments, *ad hominem* attacks, and, of course, outright lies. There are no "smokers' rights," just as there are no "drinkers' rights." The tobacco industry is not in "partnership" with the government because of taxation. The government is not running a "smoker denormalization" campaign. Selling a legal product does not make the tobacco industry a morally legitimate one, just a deadly, historical artifact of bad decisions based on greed and ignorance. The tobacco industry does target youth. And, so on.

Neither the federal government nor *Smoke Free Ontario* has yet to implement a counter-campaign (usually referred to as "tobacco industry denormalization") against the tobacco industry. Consequently, despite the weak foundation upon which the tobacco industry's campaign is built, the tobacco industry's leaders and arguments enjoy much credibility and empathy with audiences that should revile them. Rightly or wrongly, the lack of a counter-campaign can only be perceived by the public as a level of approval of the tobacco industry and its claims and positions by the leaders of *Smoke Free Ontario*. By not implementing a counter-campaign against the tobacco industry, the leaders of *Smoke Free Ontario* are not just foregoing a superb opportunity to enhance their own personal credibility and public empathy, they are reducing them. A reduction in credibility and the public's empathy diminishes the political and electoral support that *Smoke Free Ontario* leaders need to promulgate more effective, life saving tobacco control measures. It is worth noting that in other jurisdictions only campaigns that include a strong tobacco industry counter-campaign – tobacco industry denormalization – have proven effective at reducing the prevalence of smoking among young people. Tobacco industry denormalization is the best way – indeed, the only way – to protect kids from the tobacco industry.

MAKING COMMON CAUSE WITH NGOs

In the battle against smoking and the deadly effects of tobacco on smokers and non-smokers alike, we still have much to do, and a very long way to go.

Hon. George Smitherman

Smoke Free Ontario exists today because non-governmental organizations, like the Non-Smokers Rights Association, the Ontario Medical Association, the Canadian Cancer Society, the Ontario Lung Association, and many, many others, worked for decades to create the political environment that made it possible. When the Minister established the Campaign Cabinet, he implicitly recognized the importance of the NGOs.

Because of the NGOs, the Minister was able to correctly say on February 15, 2005 in his House Statement that, "the anti-tobacco movement is not the crusade of a small group of activists. It represents the broad mainstream of public opinion here in Ontario and all around the world." Nonetheless, the "small group of activists" still exists. They are as active as ever, perhaps more so. They provide much of the expertise and knowledge that *Smoke Free Ontario* relies upon. They deliver many of *Smoke Free Ontario's* programs. Most of the NGOs agree with the Minister that "we still have much to do." To the small group of activists, *Smoke Free Ontario* is a good first step.

When the Liberal government created and generously funded *Smoke Free Ontario*, it became – whether it intended to or not – the *de facto* leader of the tobacco control, anti-smoking campaign in Ontario. As a consequence, NGOs can be expected to increase pressure on the provincial government to strengthen *Smoke Free Ontario*, both the legislation that supports it and the programs and services it provides. For NGOs, this is both politically and economically astute. Politically, *Smoke Free Ontario* has effectively removed municipalities as legislative fora for increased constraints on the tobacco industry and tobacco use. Economically, it is more efficient for NGOs, for example, to spend \$200,000 raising public opinion to persuade the government to launch a \$5,000,000 tobacco industry denormalization campaign, than raise the \$5,000,000 every year and do it themselves. *Smoke Free Ontario* has created a political environment where its political leaders will be perceived as either being pulled or pushed by NGOs, or leading the way and making common cause with them. For both *Smoke Free*

Ontario and its leaders – and the NGOs, for that matter – the latter action is politically preferable.

One of the NGOs participating in *Smoke Free Ontario*, the Canadian Cancer Society, has established targets for “tobacco use reduction” that are ambitious, but achievable by 2020. The chart below is from “Targeting Cancer: an action plan for cancer prevention and detection,” published in 2003.

	TEEN SMOKING	ADULT SMOKING	QUITTING SMOKING	EXPOSURE TO SECOND-HAND SMOKE	SMOKE-FREE SPACE
MEASURE	Percent of teens who are current cigarette smokers	Percent of adults who are current cigarette smokers (ages 18 and older)	Percent of daily smokers who will make at least one attempt to quit smoking per year	Percent of Ontarians who will be exposed to second-hand smoke in the home and in private vehicles	Percent of public places (including bars, restaurants and gaming facilities) in Ontario that will be smoke-free
MOST RECENT ESTIMATE	19% ⁷	26% ⁸	48% ⁹	18% (children) 25% (adults) ¹⁰	50% coverage in Ontario ¹¹
CURRENT TREND	Holding steady	Holding steady	Slightly increasing	Slightly decreasing	Slightly increasing
CANCER 2020 TARGET	2%	5%	90%	Less than 1%	100%
DESIRED DIRECTION	Decrease	Decrease	Increase	Decrease	Increase

If the Liberal government assumes the lead in the campaign to achieve these targets, it will need the full support of the NGOs. A *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign that makes common cause with NGOs – draws strength from their campaign experience, their expertise, their large supporter bases, and their public and media credibility – will be able to nurture the political environment in which the political leaders of *Smoke Free Ontario* will have the necessary credibility and public empathy to implement the legislation and programs necessary to achieve the 2020 targets.

POLITICAL, PROGRAM, AND PUBLIC BENEFITS OF THE CAMPAIGN

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the day when nobody smokes anywhere in Ontario.

Hon. George Smitherman

The campaign envisioned in this discussion paper will benefit all those involved in *Smoke Free Ontario*, while inflicting ever greater losses on the tobacco industry and its capacity to harm and kill.

In representative democracies like Ontario, public policy is decided by politicians who are held accountable by an electorate. Over three decades of NGO anti-smoking advocacy has proven that in the end it will take politicians – men and women whom voters have trusted with the power of government and who are held accountable on Election Day – to actually win the war on tobacco. *Smoke Free Ontario* is the creation of good politicians; it will always need the support of good politicians – regardless of party affiliation – if it is to achieve its life-saving objectives. Some decry the fact that politicians always consider the electoral implications of public policy. This is hypocritical, naïve, and disingenuous, because considering the electorate is exactly what democracy is supposed to make politicians do. It is why we have the vote. Politicians in democracies can only sustain public policies that the electorate will support; *Smoke Free Ontario* is such a policy because 80% of Ontarians are not smokers. Moreover, the *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign – because of the components inherent in a successful campaign – will strengthen greatly the electoral support for the policy. This will not only directly benefit in elections the politicians who created *Smoke Free Ontario*, but also give them the increased electoral support they will need to introduce stronger tobacco control policies so they can make real the “day when nobody smokes.”

One has only to spend a few hours with *Smoke Free Ontario* program people – the men and women who attend CAWG meetings, the people heading the TCANs, or the founders and executives of the many NGOs that were the vanguard of what is now *Smoke Free Ontario* – to be moved and humbled by their commitment, expertise, and “bloody” determination to protect people from “the scourge that is tobacco.” These men and women are charged with the mission of explaining and enforcing laws, organizing student volunteers, helping smokers, convincing children not to take their first cigarette, exposing the tobacco industry for what it really is, training counsellors, and working with the most intransigent

smoking communities. And all the while around them, men and women are cruelly and painfully dying and ten year olds are lighting up because the tobacco industry and its surrogates continue to profit and use those profits to undermine *Smoke Free Ontario* and its partners' life-saving efforts. The *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign will enhance the credibility of and public empathy for its leaders and evoke strong emotions about what a *Smoke Free Ontario* means. This will reduce what non-smokers will tolerate from the tobacco industry, its partners and its proponents, and will elevate the importance and visibility of the front-line program people and their work. The greater importance and visibility will indirectly encourage smokers to quit, and if needed, seek help. The *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign will help program people organize at the local level against smoking, and counter the tobacco industry's political, promotional, and marketing campaigns. The *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign will help program people recruit and keep student volunteers. It will help them attract the support of MPPs, service clubs, the religious community, municipalities, and schools and universities. And, it will reduce – perhaps, one day even end – the tobacco industry's capacity to frustrate, confound, and undo their good works.

The greatest beneficiaries of a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign are Ontarians, smokers and non-smokers alike. When an anti-smoking campaign enhances the public's empathy for its leadership, evokes strong emotions, and confronts the tobacco industry, smoking prevalence declines, particularly among the young. By eroding the tobacco industry's campaign and the public's and some legislators' acceptance of its propaganda, a *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign will increase the political demand for greater tobacco control measures which, when implemented, will improve the quality of life of all Ontarians. It will accomplish this by diminishing human suffering, reducing health care costs, increasing economic productivity, and improving Ontario's attractiveness to business.

TO CONCLUDE: SMOKE FREE ONTARIO “BLUE SKY” CAMPAIGN IDEAS

For too long now, the forces behind the tobacco industry have had an easy ride. For too long we’ve looked away or come up with weak rationalizations as to why tobacco had to be tolerated. For too long we’ve backed down from tough decisions and decisive action. But we say, no more.

Hon. George Smitherman

This discussion paper concludes with “blue sky” campaign ideas for three reasons. The first is to add some practical ideas to this “high level” discussion paper. It is easy to float abstract concepts and expound political and campaign theory, but campaigns succeed or fail by what they put on the ground. The second reason is to stimulate discussion about building a campaign by starting with a few campaign ideas. The third reason is to introduce the most critical campaign management concept of all: the absolute necessity that a campaign – and everyone associated with it – encourages any person to “blue sky” any idea or concept without their having the slightest concern that their idea will be greeted with derision or contempt. Failure to have a campaign that welcomes and nurtures “blue sky” ideas results in one that is moribund, derivative, and dead, and that silences, demoralizes, and embitters campaign personnel. The best campaigns do not eat their young. The first response of any member of the campaign to any idea, no matter how seemingly absurd, should be to ask themselves before they utter a word, “How could I help make this idea not just work, but work better.” Poor or impossible concepts and ideas will die of their own accord as people think about how to mine them, but more often than not some colour, sometimes even a nugget, will be found in the tailings. It is never good and never necessary to kill ideas at birth or laugh at their parents. A *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign should be one where people take pleasure and delight in floating “blue sky” ideas.

When considering each of the “blue sky” campaign ideas below, keep in mind the following questions which directly flow from the campaign components discussed above. Who are the people – the audience(s) – that the idea speaks to? How can each idea be implemented so that it enhances the credibility and the public’s empathy for the *Smoke Free Ontario* leadership? What emotions will – or can – the ideas evoke and in whom? What would be the factual foundation, the program purposes, and the goals for implementing the idea?

Butt Out Hollywood! Smoking on screen is the #1 recruiter of new adolescent smokers, accounting for 52% of adolescents who start smoking, a stronger effect than even cigarette advertising. “Hollywood” movies – no matter where they are made – have a profound effect on behaviour, influencing the popular culture as to what is “right” or “wrong,” “in” or “out.” Racism, anti-Semitism and other social ills do not appear in movies today except as an evil. Movies should treat smoking the same way. Instead, Hollywood still glorifies smoking, using it to “glamorize” characters like Meg Ryan and Russell Crowe in “Proof of Life.” Hollywood movie characters smoke at a rate three times higher than the national average. Smoking in movies has tripled since 1990. In partnership with the Ministry of Education and NGOs, *Smoke Free Ontario* could develop and help export to schools around the world a Butt Out Hollywood! campaign. This concept is inspired by the American Lung Association’s SceneSmoking.org campaign and is based on the “Save the Rainforest” campaigns in the early 1970s which were developed by Swedish elementary and high school students and exported to schools around the world. Butt Out Hollywood! could ask students to research the effects of stars smoking on the prevalence of youth smoking, research which stars are smoking on screen, and prepare a short essay which would be sent to the stars asking them to help young people by not smoking on screen. The Butt Out Hollywood! campaign would begin in Ontario, Hollywood North, but students would be asked to “twin” with schools in the U.S. and around the world. Other education ministries and agencies in Canada and the U.S. would be asked to participate and help fund Butt Out Hollywood! The educational components of Butt Out Hollywood! are put into a real world context, as was the Swedish “Save the Rainforest” campaign, and would include research, consumer education, essay writing, and political participation.

Documentaries have entered the popular mainstream, and can do more than just inform and excite millions of people. They can make news. Films like *Fahrenheit 9/11*, *Super Size Me*, or *The Corporation* made people rethink, and they made news. The *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign could expose and attack the tobacco industry by co-producing and/or co-investing with TVO, other broadcasters, prominent documentary directors, and with the support of the Trillium foundation, films that employ the modern personal statement and advocacy style of the new feature-length, newsworthy documentaries.

Paid anti-smoking message placements. The *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign could provide financial or other incentives for producers of movies and television shows made in Ontario to include an anti-tobacco message. An example of this tactic was in the Mel Gibson, Danny Glover film *Lethal Weapon II* which

contained a message that encouraged people to buy only “dolphin-safe” tuna. Provincial anti-smoking mass media campaigns, while enormously helpful and necessary, have a short shelf life, whereas movie messages last for years. This fact is well understood by the tobacco industry which is why they pay to have their products used in movies.

Along with the usual anti-smoking ads, the *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign could create a few that are deliberately provocative, deliberately extremist. The purpose of these ads would be to generate controversy, criticism and, therefore, earned media. Controversy is the mother’s milk of earned media. They would provide an opportunity for the Minister and others to appear before the media and, in defending the ads and their content, demonstrate how determined they and the government are to protect the lives of Ontarians.

Introduce a provincial bill that recommends that there be a minute of silence on World No Tobacco Day to remember the 16,000 men and women “who lost their lives this year to smoking.”

Re-orient stupid.ca to be a predominantly tobacco industry denormalization site, to show young people how the tobacco industry works to addict them. The evidence is clear: tobacco industry denormalization is the one message that truly resonates with young people and influences them not to start smoking and to quit.

Tobacco farmers, tobacco-dependent communities and convenience stores are the sympathetic face of the tobacco industry. Advocates who find it easy to attack big business for crimes often find it difficult to attack those whom they sympathize with for committing the same crime. Smoking is so deadly there should not be two standards of morality and conduct: one for “big, bad” business and another for “friends.” The *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign could conduct a pre-campaign conditioning of the political environment and of public opinion with op-ed pieces and articles that argue that tobacco farmers, convenience store operators, and others are complicit with the tobacco industry. Most convenience stores are *not* convenience stores. They are, in fact, tobacconists that happen to sell Mars Bars, Coca Cola, and milk. The day should come when tobacco is only available from licensed tobacconists or government tobacco stores and where the under-aged are neither permitted to enter nor to work. That day will never come if tobacco-selling convenience stores enjoy the undeserved sympathy of the non-smoking public.

Use spending announcements to do more. Spending announcements by the Minister and others associated with *Smoke Free Ontario* should be used as opportunities to promote a broader anti-tobacco, anti-tobacco industry message, and they should employ the four components of campaigns and anti-campaigns listed above. Spending announcements and associated events should reflect the fact that “politicians” spend tax payers’ money, but “leaders” save tax payers’ lives, protect their children, and improve their communities. *Smoke Free Ontario* and the *Smoke Free Ontario* campaign should be about leading and leaders.