

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY CAMPAIGNS TARGET SODA, TOBACCO AND CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES



Watchdog groups Safer Chemicals Healthy Families and the Environmental Defense Fund are running a print-ad campaign, attempting to expose chemical manufacturers, whom they allege have been deceiving Americans about the dangers of the products they manufacture, just as tobacco companies did. They believe that just as tobacco companies were regulated by law and reined in, a similar attitude needs to be adopted for the chemical companies. The group's first ad showed a Joe Camel ad from 1991, with the iconic camel holding out a packet of Camel cigarettes; alongside the ad is the same iconic mascot, but this time the pack of cigarettes is replaced by a beaker of steamy bluish green liquid. The tagline changes from Joe Camel to Joe Chemical and asks the viewer, if we have migrated from Camel to Chemical? The second ad shows the Marlboro cowboy, on horseback, lasso in hand, riding towards a setting sun, towards a golden hued horizon. Under both the ads is a statement that charges the chemical makers and the tobacco companies of telling lies and duping the gullible people into believing that their products are not unsafe and that, motivated by their bottom lines and profits, are unable to differentiate between what is morally correct and what is not? The ad then categorically states, to set the system right, "We need the Safe Chemicals Act." A study conducted by the United States Department of Health and Human Services found that, cigarettes and other tobacco products causes more than 400,000 deaths each year. Moreover, smoking led to diseases that included cancer, respiratory illnesses, heart disease and other health problems. Meanwhile, the war on soda and sugary drinks is attracting serious debate and discussions and elected-officials and other lawmakers are insisting that these beverages contribute considerably to the health-care costs of obese patients, whose obesity is to a large extent owing to the harmful food and beverages that they consume. The war is akin to the war waged on tobacco. A study that appeared in the American Dietetic Association (JADA), said that in the United States, 40 percent of the energy consumed by kids comes from calories that are considered empty. According to Rae-Ellen Kavey, M.D., M.P.H., professor of Pediatrics at the University of Rochester Medical Center, "Children who drink a lot of sugar-sweetened beverages including fruit juice are at risk to develop obesity and will find it hard to break the habit of consuming these empty calories in the future." The American Beverage Association, to combat the ad war waged against them, have already spent close on \$16 million of television ads, trying to assuage the people that the advocates of no-soda, no-sugary drinks are not right, since they are committed to help fight obesity. Moreover, they are also manufacturing soft drinks with low-calorie options, as also low and zero-calorie drinks. Their commitment to health-concerns is clear they say, as they have replaced high-calorie soft drinks in schools with lower-calorie choices. Worried that their sales and bottom lines would be affected the American Beverage Association has already spent almost more than its total advertisement budget for last year. Last year they spent \$9.7 million, whilst the expenditure this year has already crossed \$16 million. The biggest threat and one that set the alarm bells ringing for to the soft-drinks industry was Mayor Mike Bloomberg's call to ban soft drinks above 16 ounces. New York is the benchmark that other's emulated and the reaction and responses were swift. Many states have levied heavy taxes on the industry and hundreds of ads have been placed over the harmful effects of the beverages. The Center for Consumer Freedom has targeted the mayor in a humorous ad which shows him dressed up as a nanny and poses the question, "What next?" Are we going to see him limit the width of a pizza, the size of a hamburger or the amount of cheese on your bagel? The ad has a tag line that says, New Yorkers need a Mayor not a Nanny. The ad is headlined, "The Nanny" and says, we thought we were living in a free land.