

Tobacco Companies Shouldn't Become Health Brands to Fix Their Reputation. They Should Focus on These Issues Instead

Media Analysis Summary



Tobacco companies' efforts to reposition themselves as health brands were met with significant backlash and inflicted additional harm to their reputation.

PR and comms should focus on more viable goals, such as promoting the benefits of e-cigarettes, whose image suffered significantly when the US Food and Drug Administration ordered Juul to remove its popular products from the marketplace - news that made Regulation and policy the main topic in the debate:

Topics in the tobacco debate by share of voice



36%

Regulation and policy



23%

Health and wellness



18%

Marketing and advertising



15%

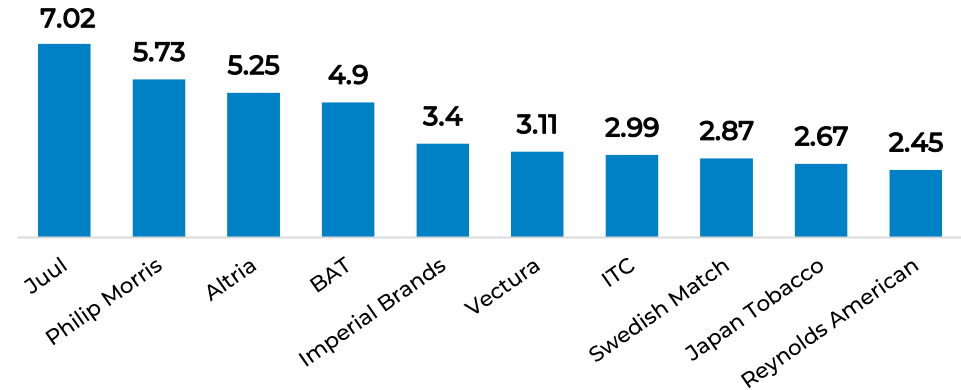
Smoking alternatives



8%

ESG investing

Top 10 companies in the tobacco debate by media influence score



The media conversation around Juul, which emerged the most influential company in our research sample, showed that tobacco PR campaigns should concentrate on the harm reduction potential of e-cigarettes, demonstrating their commitment to helping smokers quit.

5 ways tobacco companies can improve their reputation:

- Don't try too hard to position yourself as a health brand
- Focus on fixing e-cigarettes' portrayal
- Educate the public on nicotine
- Highlight the medical benefits of cannabis
- Explore new ground: secondhand smoking

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