



# Online Marketing of Tobacco Product in Indonesia

Situation Report (December 2024-February 2025)



## Background

Article 13 of the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) recommends banning all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (TAPS) across all channels. Online platforms, which are more difficult to oversee than traditional media channels, pose a significant challenge to controlling and curbing tobacco marketing. Vital Strategies' Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement (TERM) is a digital media monitoring and reporting system that tracks tobacco marketing on social media platforms and news sites with widest circulation in each country.

This situation report is part of a series that summarizes observed examples of online tobacco marketing in Indonesia. TERM does not allege or attempt to identify whether these tobacco marketing instances are in violation of local or international laws. Visit the [TERM](#) website to learn more and to view all reports.

## Definitions used in this report

**Brand-extended products and services:** Otherwise referred to as brand extensions, are non-tobacco products or services that use the established brand name or trademark of a tobacco company.

**Community marketing and event promotions:** Use of popular activities, such as those involving sports or music, to indirectly promote tobacco products, especially through live events. TERM has observed the use of community marketing in Indonesia, where brands focusing on music, sports and adventure are used to indirectly promote a company's tobacco brands. This is largely through the sponsorship of events that appeal to youth such as concerts, competitions to attend sports matches and more. The brands have a significant presence across social media and other digital media platforms and use these platforms to promote events.

**Direct marketing:** Marketing of tobacco products with clear visuals of the product and/or its use, or the product brand name.

**Indirect marketing:** Promotion of the tobacco company and/or product and its use through brand extension, surrogate marketing, price discounts and giveaways, and sponsorship of events or activities.

**Volumes:** Total number of mentions (posts, including reposts/retweets).

**Estimated reach:** Total number of people who were potentially exposed to the mentions.

**Influencers/Influential Voices** – The most \*influential and frequent authors and social pages that have generated, shared or have been mentioned within the conversation. \* Influence measured by followers, interactions (Likes, comments, Views, Share for a post online) around the mentions, and potential reach of the mentions.

## Executive Summary

Tobacco marketing in Indonesia has been shaped by regulatory pressures, economic shifts, and changing consumer trends, while continued investments in production, innovation, and community engagement have been employed alongside lifestyle campaigns, social media, and cultural strategies to sustain market presence. Non-tobacco products accounted for majority (70%) of marketing activity, primarily driven by community-based tactics leveraging entertainment and sports. Electronic cigarettes accounted for 24% of marketing activity, with Instagram being the most popular platform. Key players PT Djarum and PT HM Sampoerna focused on brand visibility through integrated marketing spanning direct ads, public relations (PR), and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Despite regulatory challenges, the industry continues to adapt, with electronic cigarettes, heated tobacco and nicotine products gaining momentum. Promotional efforts subtly blend product features with youth-oriented lifestyle themes, downplaying health risks.

A total of 3,093 tobacco marketing-related online posts and news articles were identified across social media platforms and news sites between December 2024 and February 2025.

- **Platforms:** Online tobacco marketing-related posts continue to favour imagery and video content, constituting 53% of the total volume from Instagram. Followed by posts from TikTok (4%) and YouTube (3%). TikTok videos had the highest engagement compared to other platforms and had the most posts about electronic cigarettes. Posts from X (22%) included news articles about the tobacco industry. News sites (5%) posted content about tobacco companies' Corporate Social Welfare activities.
- **Marketing tactics:** Tobacco products are predominantly marketed through community-based marketing and direct ads, with these two categories comprising 81% of marketing tactics. General PR (8%) and CSR (6%) tactics were used to highlight tobacco companies such as PT HM Sampoerna's contributions to employee welfare and community development.
- **Message framing:** Over half of the marketing instances have entertainment framing (58%) related to the finals of a badminton international competition from the PB Djarum account which targets sports fans. In addition, posts from Boldriders (associated with Djarum LA Bold brand) and DCDC (associated with Djarum Coklat brand). This strategy reflects the continued leveraging of entertainment, lifestyle, sports, adventure, and camaraderie to enhance brand visibility. Product features (21%) were used to promote specifications of electronic cigarettes to attract tech-savvy consumers. In comparison, informational messaging (9%) was used by tobacco companies to create a positive public image by highlighting their social and economic contributions to the country.

## **Spotlight Issue: The Illusion of the “Vape” Lifestyle and the Reality of Addiction: How E-Cigarette Marketing Hooks Youth in Indonesia**

Electronic cigarette brands in Indonesia are changing how young people see themselves and their choices. Electronic cigarette smoking or “vaping” is no longer shown simply as a nicotine habit. It is marketed as a way to belong, express creativity, and look modern. This approach follows the same tactics used by other harmful industries that link their products to entertainment, music, and lifestyle trends to make addiction seem acceptable.

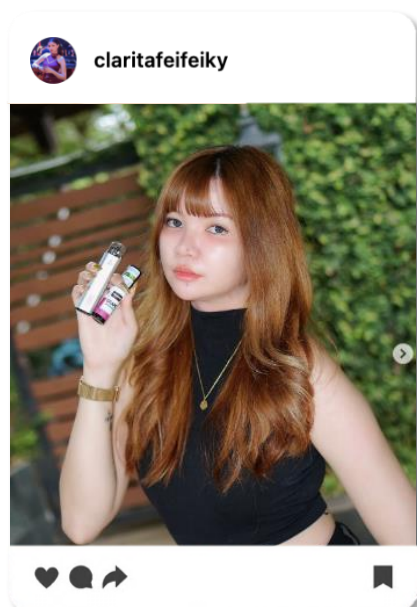
Much of this marketing focuses on young women. Social media influencers, often women themselves, show vaping as fashionable, fun, and even empowering. Sleek devices are paired with makeup, handbags, or stylish outfits, making them look like harmless accessories. For a teenage girl scrolling Instagram or TikTok, these images make vaping seem normal, even desirable. This does more than sell a product. It builds a youth culture where nicotine use becomes part of social life and personal style. What looks like personal choice is actually shaped by careful marketing that makes addiction look like confidence and freedom.

The problem is not just cultural but also linked to the larger political and economic environment that allows the tobacco industry to thrive. The tobacco industry takes advantage of social media platforms, weak enforcement of online rules, and the popularity of influencers to keep reaching young people. Vaping is promoted as a lifestyle upgrade, while the health risks are downplayed or hidden. Behind the images of freedom and creativity is a clear strategy to create new generations of users and ensure continued profits, with public health paying the price.

The government has introduced [new rules](#), such as banning sales to those under 21, restricting sales near schools, and adding a 10 percent tax on vape products in 2024, but enforcement is uneven. Online marketing often slips through these measures, using events, challenges, and online communities to keep vaping attractive and socially acceptable.

These trends show why stronger action is needed to protect young people. Tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship bans must also apply to digital spaces. Without clear rules and consistent enforcement, brands will continue to use influencers and lifestyle marketing to normalize addiction.

A safer [online environment](#) will require better monitoring of social media platforms, stronger accountability for harmful content, and more public awareness of how online marketing shapes behavior. With stronger policies and better digital governance, it is possible to prevent harmful products from being promoted as part of youth culture and protect the health of the next generation.



This post on Instagram illustrates how influencers market electronic cigarette with a focus on a creative expression tied to fashion and personal identity.

Source: [@claritafeifeiky Instagram](#)





This Instagram post from Joiway Indonesia invited consumers, referred to as “JOIFANS,” to join a New Year celebration. It highlighted community, entertainment, and fun as part of the brand’s identity.

Source: [joiway\\_id Instagram](#)



YouTubers like Fakirliquid specialize in reviewing new devices, such as the Lambo X Pro Kit, highlighting product features to appeal to tech-savvy users.

Source: Fakir Liquid YouTube



This Instagram post from GeekVape Indonesia promotes the Aegis Hero Q Lomo Edition. The product is shown as a compact, stylish device designed for active users. The caption emphasizes durability, ergonomic design, and long-lasting performance, presenting the vape as both functional and trendy.

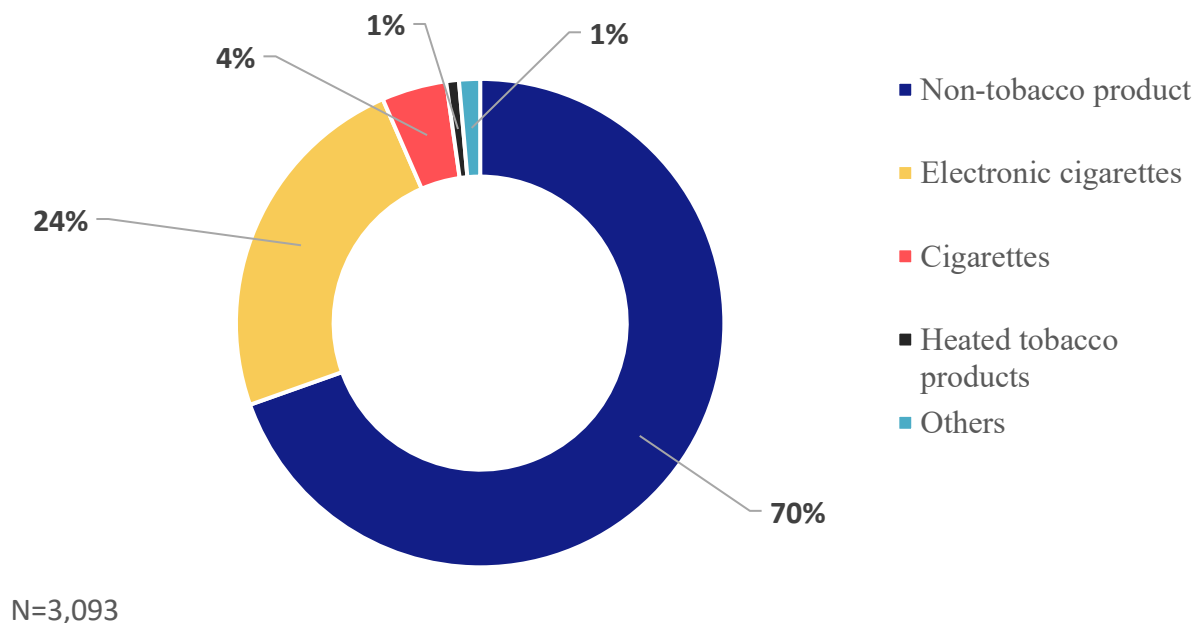
Source: GeekVape Indonesia Instagram

## Detailed Insight

**Which product categories dominate the marketing landscape?** Non-tobacco products accounted for majority of posts (70%) from proxy accounts associated with cigarette brands. These posts focus on popular interests, such as football, badminton, electronic music festivals, or travel. The account names and logos are intentionally like the cigarette brand, ensuring that audiences make the connection even without direct product promotion. By sharing exclusive sports updates, sponsoring music events, or highlighting cultural activities, these brands build a loyal community around shared interest, creates positive associations while expanding reach. This indirect marketing appears harmless and community-oriented, but its hidden goal is to sustain brand recognition and subtly pave the way for tobacco promotion (Figure 1).

Electronic cigarettes were directly marketed (24%). Cigarettes (4%) and heated tobacco product marketing (1%) were also observed. The "others" category, which includes products like cigars and nicotine pouches were the least observed (1%) (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**  
Total Posts by Type of Tobacco Products

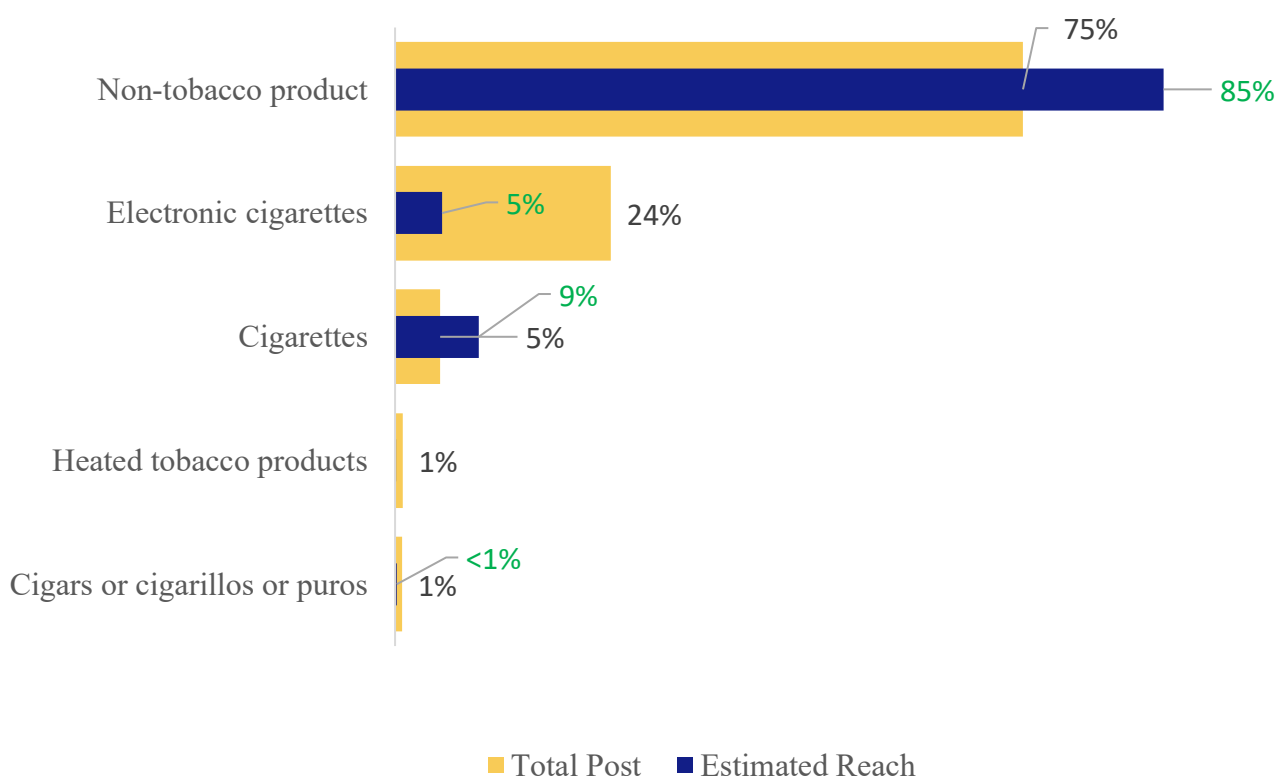


Base: 3,093 total posts, Indonesia (Dec'24 – Feb'25)

**What is the marketing reach by product type?** Non-tobacco product marketing (75%) come from accounts that appear to focus on popular lifestyle interests (Figure 2). This is a strategy where tobacco brands promote lifestyle content—such as sports, music, travel, or local culture—to build a loyal audience and maintain brand relevance. While these posts do not explicitly advertise cigarettes, they create positive associations and keep the brand visible, ultimately acting as a gateway to promote tobacco products and expanding reach (85%). Electronic cigarette marketing posts (24%) had a low estimated reach (5%). Despite fewer posts, cigarettes had higher reach (9%) compared to electronic cigarettes, primarily due to mentions on news websites that typically have a large audience base. Heated tobacco products and cigars marketing were also observed (2%) (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Total Posts and Estimated Reach by Type of Products: 790 million

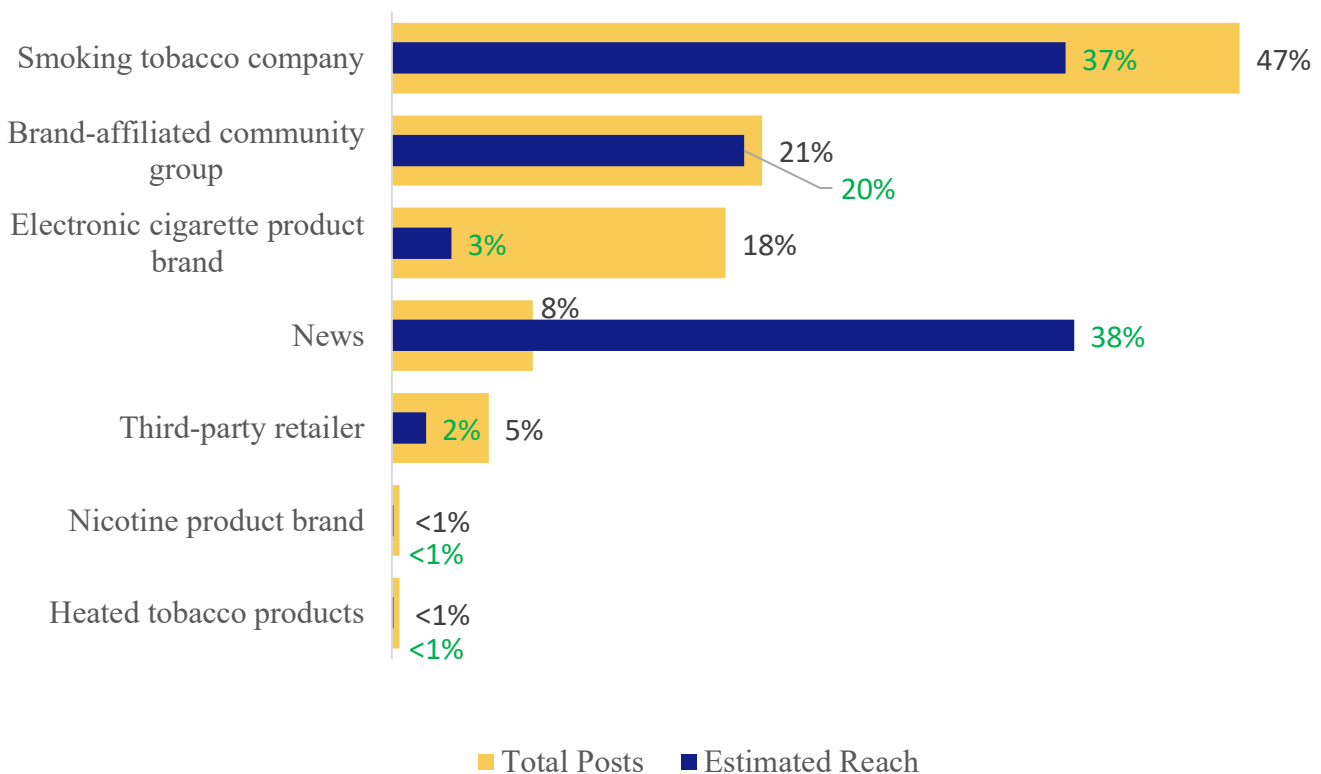


Base: 3,093 total posts and 790 million 'estimated reach', Indonesia (Dec'24 – Feb'25)

**Note:** Estimated reach estimates the actual number of audiences presumed to have been reached by the message. The system automatically calculated this using the number of account followers/subscribers. The system assumes all the followers of those accounts have seen the message.

**What entities dominate tobacco marketing volume and reach?** Smoking tobacco companies (47%) and brand-affiliated community groups (21%) had the most posts and estimated reach, indicating a strong presence and extensive reach compared to other tobacco-related accounts (Figure 3). Smoking tobacco company accounts had the highest estimated reach (37%), followed by brand-affiliated community groups (20%). News accounts, despite their low activity (8%), manage to achieve a significant reach (38%) due to high audience base of news websites. Electronic cigarette product brands (18%) followed but had lower estimated reach (3%). Third-party retailers, nicotine product brands, and heated tobacco products had less posts (6%) and reach (2%) (Figure 3).

**Figure 3**  
Total posts and Estimated Reach by Account type

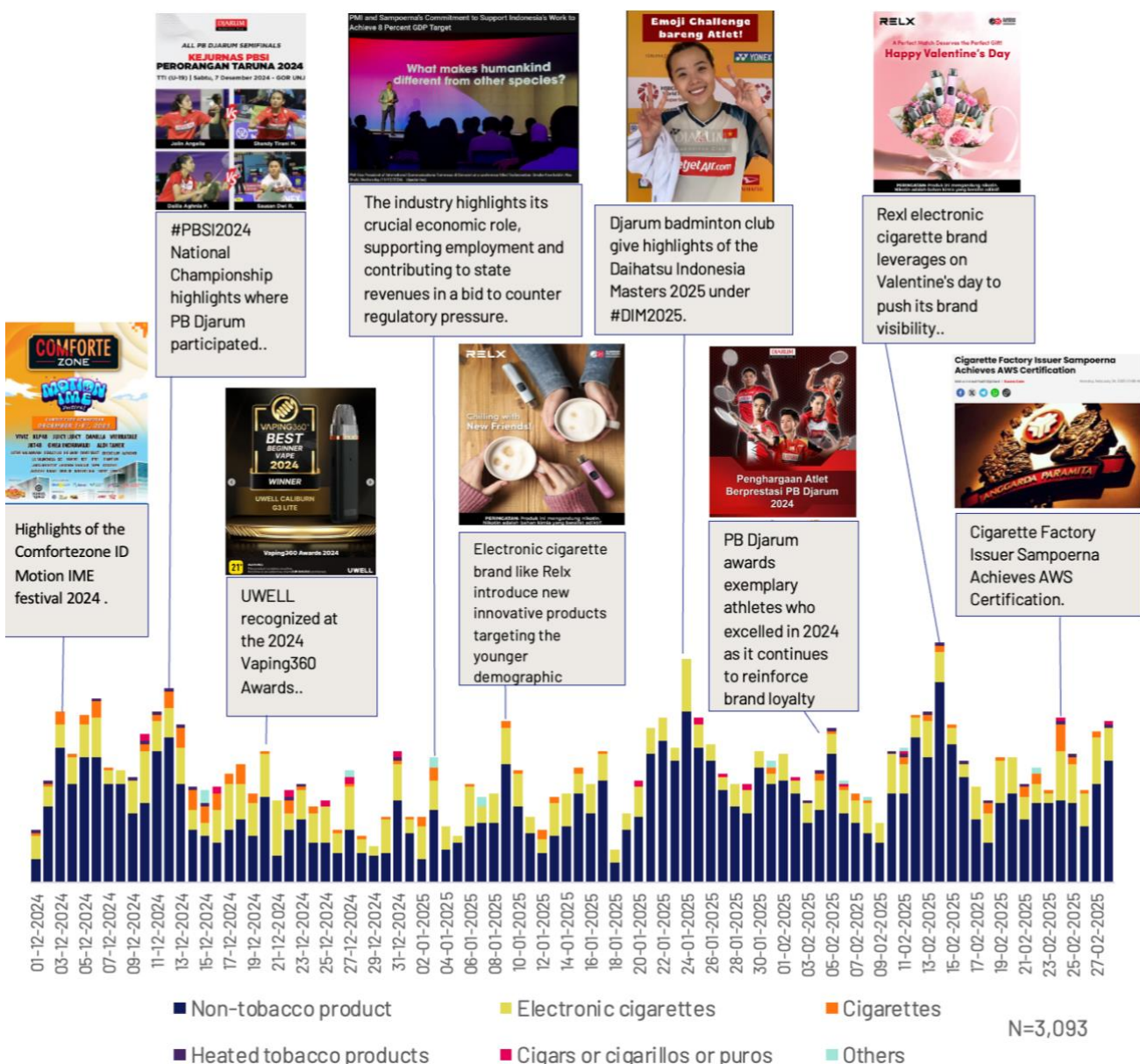


Base: 3,093 total posts and 790 million 'estimated reach', Indonesia (Dec'24 – Feb'25)



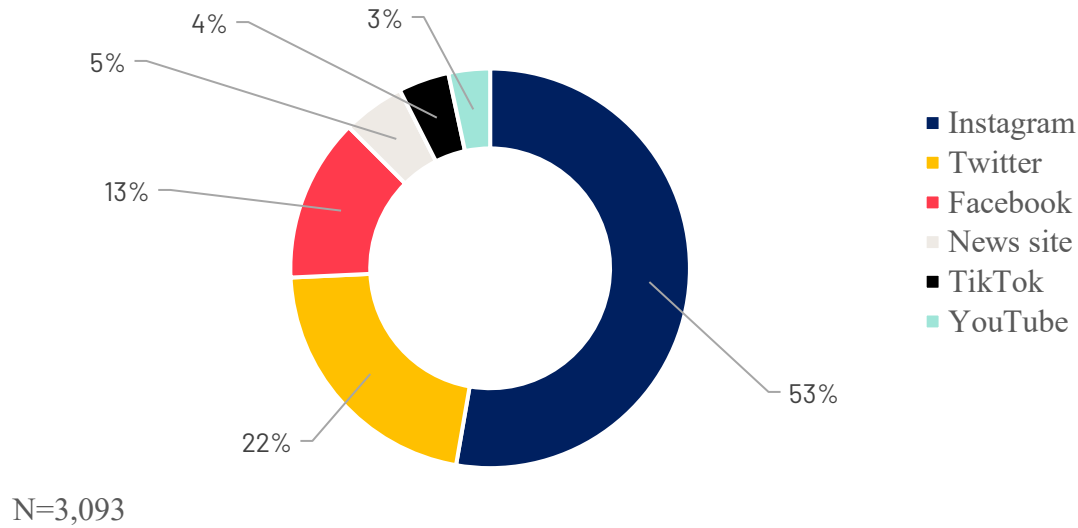
**What drove marketing peaks this quarter?** This quarter, tobacco and electronic cigarette companies maintained a steady online presence, with clear peaks in early December, late January, and mid-February (Figure 4). Most posts promoted non-tobacco products to keep brands visible while avoiding direct scrutiny of cigarettes. In December, brands linked themselves to youth-oriented events like the Comfortzone ID Motion IME Festival 2024 and pushed messages framing the industry as economically essential, highlighting jobs and tax contributions to counter regulatory pressure. By January, the Relx electronic cigarette brand launched design-focused products likely to appeal to younger audiences, while sports sponsorships—including PB Djarum’s role in the Daihatsu Indonesia Masters 2025 and athlete award ceremonies—helped reinforce positive brand associations under the guise of community support. In February, companies used Valentine’s Day promotions, corporate PR such as Sampoerna’s AWS certification, and industry awards like UWELL’s Vaping360 recognition to legitimize and normalize their presence. Overall, companies’ combined sports, culture, lifestyle marketing, and corporate PR to sustain relevance and soften public perception, while diverting attention from the harms of their core products (Figure 4).

Figure 4  
Trend of Different Tobacco Products



**Where was the marketing observed?** Online tobacco marketing in Indonesia between December 2024 and February 2025 was predominantly seen on Instagram (53%), followed by X (22%), Facebook (13%), and news sites (5%). Content from TikTok (4%) and YouTube (3%) were also observed (Figure 5).

**Figure 5**  
**Total Posts by Platform**

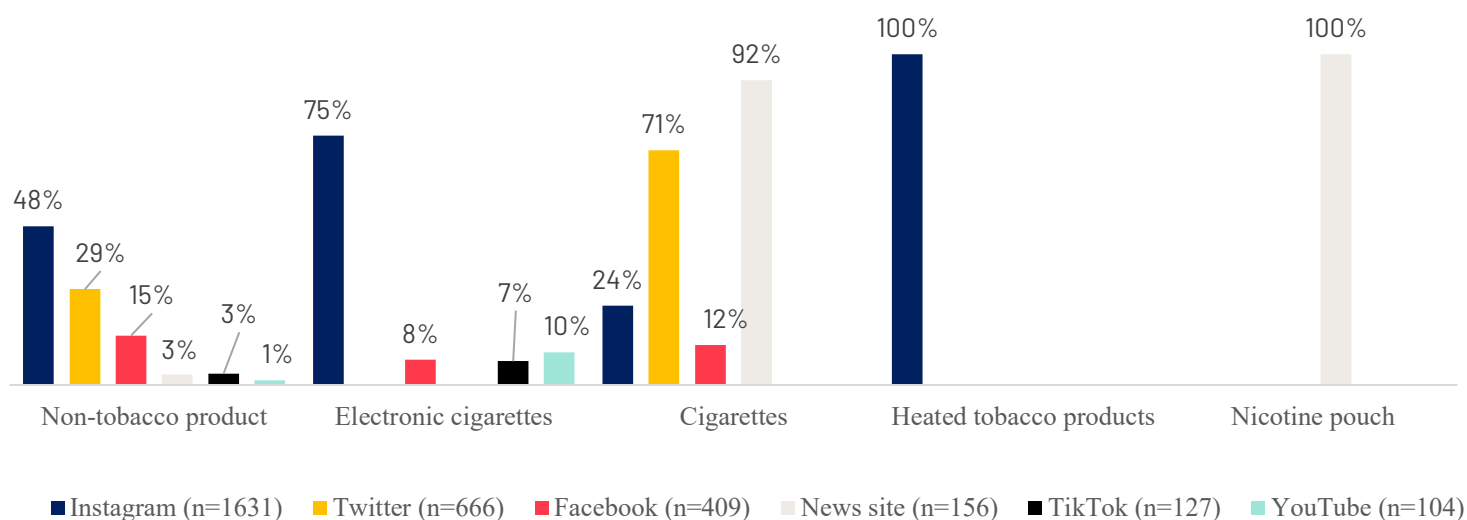


Base: 3,093 total posts, Indonesia (Dec'24 – Feb'25)

**How did the promotion of different tobacco products vary across social media platforms?** Instagram, the most popular platform for tobacco-related marketing, is particularly favored for promoting electronic cigarettes (75%) and non-tobacco products (48%). X is the second most used platform at 22%, with a notable presence of non-tobacco products (29%) and cigarettes (27%), indicating its role in facilitating broader conversations and news dissemination related to the tobacco industry. Facebook also has a significant contribution at 13%, especially for non-tobacco products (15%) and cigars or cigarillos (63%).

News sites accounted for a small share of total volume (5%), but most cigarette-related content appeared on these platforms (92%). TikTok and YouTube had a smaller market share (4% and 3%) yet carried notable amounts of electronic cigarette content (7% and 10%). Heated tobacco products were promoted exclusively on Instagram (100%). Nicotine pouches were observed only on news sites (100%) (Figure 6).

**Figure 6**  
**Total Posts by Tobacco Product Type by Platform**



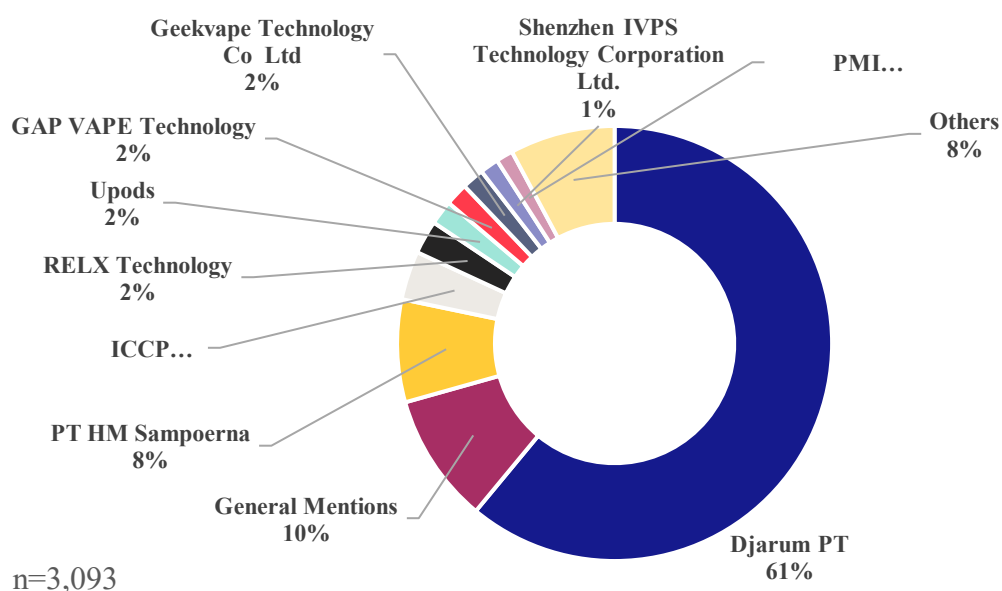
Base: 3,093 total posts, Indonesia (Dec'24 – Feb'25)

**Who are the key players?** PT Djarum dominated online conversations, appearing in the majority of posts (61%). This reflects a concentrated marketing strategy that keeps the brand highly visible and closely tied to lifestyle-oriented messaging. PT HM Sampoerna followed with a much smaller share of posts (8%), showing a limited yet notable presence that helps maintain visibility without the same scale of engagement.

Electronic cigarette companies contributed only modestly. ICCP appeared occasionally (4%), followed by RELX and GAP VAPE, which were mentioned even less (2% each). Other companies, including Upods, Geekvape Technology Co Ltd, and Shenzhen IVPS Technology Corporation Ltd, had minimal mentions (2% or less), reflecting their marginal role in shaping online discussions.

Other tobacco companies collectively accounted for a small portion of posts (8%), highlighting a fragmented and less coordinated presence beyond the dominant players. General news mentions, which included posts about tobacco without direct brand references such as regulations or health risks, made up a modest share of the total volume (10%). These discussions reflect ongoing public interest but do not contribute to brand-led visibility.

**Figure 7**  
**Total Posts by Tobacco Company**



Base: 3,093 total posts, Indonesia (Dec'24 – Feb'25)

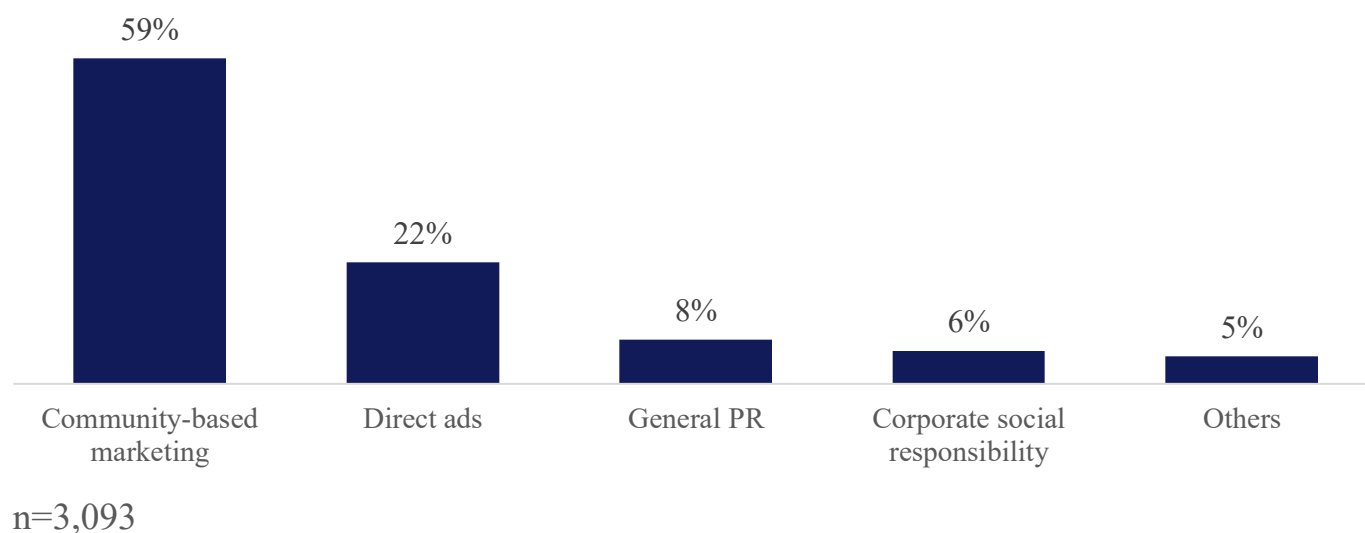
**Note:** 'General Mentions' posts are primarily posts that are about tobacco but do not feature any brand such as regulatory and health mentions, and third-party retailers. Others include Shenzhen Rincoe Technology, Upods Indonesia, Geekvape Technology Co Ltd, Taru Martani, Shenzhen Uwell, Lost Vape, Oxva Indonesia, PT Wismilak, Craving Vapor, Lost Vape, Wismilak Group, PT. Taru Martani. Other, Bentoel Group, BAT, Rincoe, LVE Vapor, and British American Tobacco.

## What marketing tactics were used?<sup>1</sup>

Most tobacco marketing relied on community-based approaches (59%), focusing on lifestyle content, local events, and social spaces to build brand familiarity. Direct ads followed at a smaller but still notable level (22%), showing that traditional promotional campaigns remained important.

General public relations efforts (8%) mainly shared industry news such as product launches or market developments. Corporate social responsibility initiatives (6%), by companies like Sampoerna highlighted employee welfare and community development projects to improve their image. Heavy use of community-based marketing, supported by direct ads and CSR, helped normalize tobacco by linking it to everyday social and lifestyle activities.

**Figure 8**  
**Total Posts by Marketing Tactics**



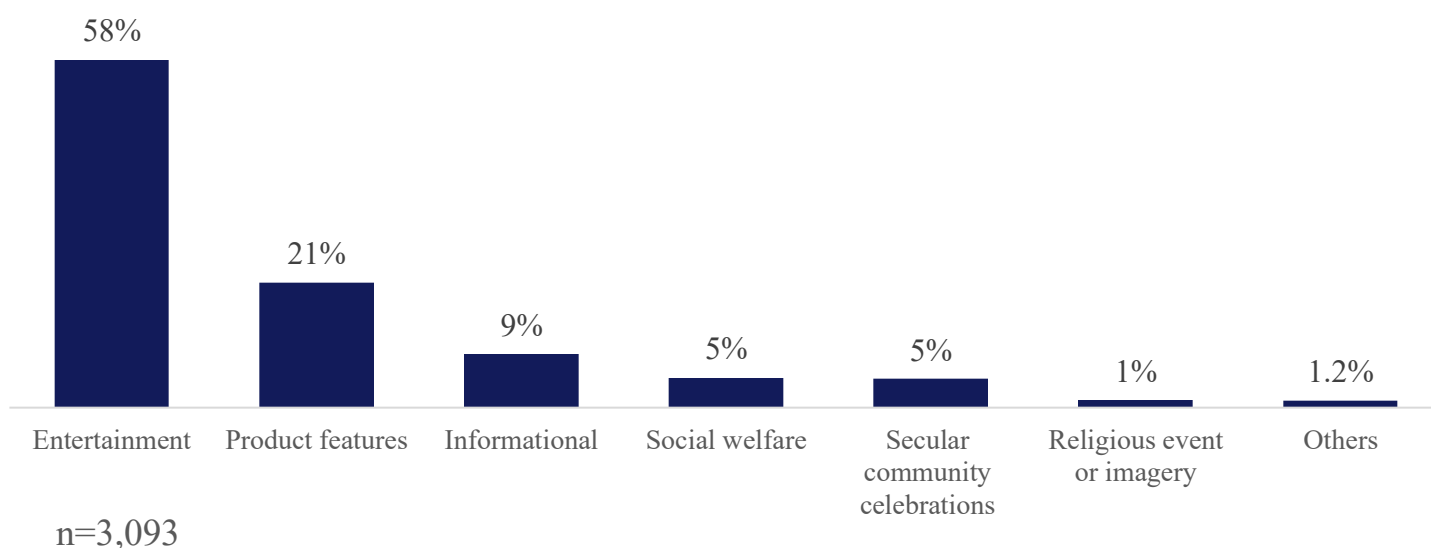
Base: 3,093 total posts, Indonesia (Dec'24 – Feb'25)

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for definitions of marketing tactics.



**What messaging was used?** The tobacco industry heavily relied on entertainment messaging (58%) especially by the PB Djarum, Boldriders, and DCDC accounts which used themes of entertainment, lifestyle, sports, adventure, and camaraderie to enhance brand visibility and connect with target audiences. Product features was the second most common message framing tactic (21%), especially in the electronic cigarette category. Informational messaging (9%) was used to highlight tobacco companies' social and economic contributions or to counter regulatory concerns. Social welfare and secular community celebrations were also observed (5% each). Religious event and imagery were also observed (1%).

**Figure 9**  
Total Posts by Message Framing Used in Marketing



Base: 3,093 total posts, Indonesia (Dec'24 – Feb'25)

Electronic cigarette products followed a similar pattern, combining “vaping” culture with popular interests such as badminton and regional identities to make the products more relatable and acceptable. By linking tobacco and e-cigarette marketing to entertainment, sports, and local culture, companies aimed to normalize their products and strengthen brand acceptance among younger audiences.

Figure 10  
Top Hashtags Used by Tobacco Related Accounts



Base: top 50 hashtags with highest frequency within the total posts, Indonesia (Dec'24 – Feb'25)



Based on news articles observed in February, there was a clear pattern of strong resistance from the tobacco industry toward proposed public health regulations, particularly the plain or uniform packaging policy outlined in the draft Health Minister's Regulation.

PB Djarum, the badminton club affiliated with PT Djarum, continued to use sports sponsorship to promote its brand under the guise of community support. The Kudus PBSI Regency Management (Pengkab), in partnership with the Bakti Olahraga Djarum Foundation, held the SenengMinton Festival to encourage young children to take an interest in badminton. While presented as a sports development initiative, it functioned as a tactic to build early community loyalty to the tobacco company, despite regulations prohibiting such indirect promotions.

Tobacco companies promoted narratives about their production quality, portraying cigarette brands as innovative and focused on improving standards. These special feature articles, framed as public relations content, downplayed the health risks of tobacco products and instead aimed to raise the company's profile and strengthen consumer trust.

Tobacco companies emphasized their economic contributions, highlighting job creation and state revenue to position themselves as essential to the economy. This narrative was used to counter growing regulatory pressure and shift public focus away from the health harms of tobacco products. By framing themselves as economically indispensable, the industry aimed to delay or weaken the adoption of stricter tobacco control policies.

Tobacco companies leveraged consumer shifts to stay relevant, expanding their so-called "smoke-free" product lines. This tactic allowed tobacco companies to stay relevant, maintain market share, and avoid stricter regulation by positioning "harm reduction" as a marketing shield rather than an evidence-based cessation pathway. It also undermines public health efforts by normalizing addictive nicotine use under the guise of safer alternatives.

## Examples of Message Framing

Tobacco-related marketing in Indonesia has been shaped by community engagement, cultural integration, and lifestyle branding. Promotional efforts have been framed to highlight heritage, economic contributions, and sustainability, while appealing to youth through social media, events, and influencer collaborations.



### Entertainment

The posts are centered around music and lifestyle for the Boldriders Indonesia community which is affiliated to Djarum PT. The strategy is used to build camaraderie and solidarity among brand consumers by identifying with their interest and pastimes, in this case the biking community.



### Product features

The post showcases the new Joiway X1 Pro Max which is gold plated and aimed at the premium segment, the product is also being marketed via a young “sophisticated” influencer to drive appeal for the segment.



### Informational

Mostly industry related or product information aimed at creating awareness of highlighting PR related strategies to convince or adhere consumers to the brands – in this case the industry provides information to counter regulatory pressures.



### Social Welfare

Tobacco brands highlight their support for the community, economy and livelihoods to build solidarity and justify their existence and use such content to counter regulatory pressures.



### Secular community celebrations

The RELX brand used Valentines day to promote its product as a suitable gift to loved ones.



### Religious event or imagery

Imagery designed to align with consumer culture and aspirations such as the celebration of Christmas. This builds consumer loyalty and solidarity.

**Appendix Table 1. Definitions for Marketing Tactics and Message Framing Identified**

<b>Marketing tactic</b>	<b>Type of marketing strategy used, which captures the intention of marketing (to sell products, create brand endearment/loyalty, etc.)</b>
Brand extension	A separate brand of non-tobacco items that are produced by tobacco companies/conglomerates. The products may use the trademark logo or the name of the parent tobacco company. These products do not show any features that indicate association with any tobacco products.
Community-based marketing	Promotes the sale or use of tobacco products indirectly by creating brand connection to a specific community or subculture. (e.g. Photography enthusiasts, electronic music lovers).
Corporate social responsibility	Pairs the company/brand or product with socially responsible activities (e.g., water conservation projects, financing vaccination drives).
Direct ads	Promotes the sale or use of tobacco products in a straightforward manner; shows images of the product.
Events, occasions, sponsorships	Pairs the company/brand or tobacco product with events, occasions, sponsorships and contests (e.g., product sponsorship of sports events, live concerts, holiday greetings).
General profile raising	Intended to raise the profile of the brand/company but does not fall into any of the other categories (e.g., brand/company wishing a happy new year).
Price promotions	Promotes the sale or use of tobacco products and new nicotine and tobacco products through price discounting (e.g., 10% off).
<b>Message framing</b>	<b>Underlying theme around which the whole message of the post is built.</b>
Entertainment	Posts that promote the product as being entertaining and fun. This category also includes posts that use entertainment-related content including memes, funny videos or jokes.
Environment eco-awareness	Any post that addresses climate change, conservation, sustainable development goals, or encouraging people to support environmental causes.
Glamorization	Posts that associate use of products as aspirational, luxurious or part of an ideal, fashionable lifestyle.
Health claims	Posts that present the product as healthier than other products or as being less harmful than conventional tobacco products.
Informational	Posts that instruct viewers how to use a product. This category also includes posts that provide background information on the company.
Personal care and wellness	Posts that associate products with relaxation or stress management. This category also includes posts that frame products as being used for social bonding, including forming community around use of the product with like-minded peers.



Product features	Posts that primarily emphasize the available choices of product flavors and design including device colors, as well as technical specifications of the product. Posts without any text descriptions or keywords that only display the product are also included in this category.
Religious event or imagery	Posts that feature religious imagery or celebrate religious festivals and events.
Secular community celebrations	Posts that offer celebrations or greetings for non-religious social and sporting events that are celebrated globally or nationally. This category also includes content celebrating achievements or honoring the memory of those who passed away.
Social welfare	Posts that showcase activities sponsored or supported by company/brand that are meant to improve their public image. Any posts associating the company with social welfare schemes, livelihood initiatives, women's empowerment, entrepreneurship, educational scholarships, etc.

## Methods

The Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement (TERM) is a digital media monitoring and reporting system that is AI-supported and human expertise-driven that tracks tobacco marketing on social media platforms and news sites. The primary purpose of TERM is to identify instances of tobacco marketing, a known public health risk. TERM does not allege or attempt to identify whether these tobacco marketing instances are in violation of local or international laws.

This report summarizes information gathered by an artificial intelligence-driven monitoring tool from publicly available posts on social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and TikTok, and from online articles on news sites.

Instances of tobacco marketing on social media are identified using keyword-based queries and through the regular monitoring of social media accounts that were identified purposively via input from tobacco control experts, market research data and keyword searches. News articles are identified by tracking the top 20 newspapers based on circulation in English and the commonly spoken language in each country through their social media accounts, and a combination of RSS feeds, custom scrappers, and LexisNexis if behind a paywall.

Data coding is first conducted automatically and is then reviewed by Vital Strategies researchers using a theory-driven codebook. The analysis is currently restricted to content in English. Data restrictions and privacy laws followed by social media platforms may lead to undercounting of marketing. Read our full methodology [here](#).

The platform does not track targeted paid ads, peer-to-peer marketing, or marketing in private groups. The analysis is currently restricted to content in English and Hindi. Data restrictions and privacy laws followed by social media platforms may lead to undercounting of marketing activity

### Disclaimer

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### About the Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement

Vital Strategies' Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement (TERM) is a digital media monitoring system that tracks tobacco marketing online on social media platforms and news sites. TERM is currently operating in India, Indonesia and Mexico.

### About Vital Strategies

Vital Strategies is a global health organization that believes every person should be protected by equitable and effective public health systems. We partner with governments, communities and organizations to reimagine public health, and the result is millions of people living longer, healthier lives. Our goal is to build a future where better health is supported across all facets of our lives, in our families, communities, in our environment and our governments.

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