Cigarettes are possibly the most marketed product in the world. While there is no reliable estimate of global cigarette marketing expenditures, it is clearly in the tens of billions of US dollars a year.

In the USA alone over $10 billion is spent a year on marketing cigarettes, and this at a time when advertising is prohibited on television and radio, when there are limitations on certain types of outdoor advertising and sponsorship, and when cigarette sales are falling. Annual marketing expenditure is over $200 per smoker, and over 46 cents for every pack sold.

Promotional allowances, that is payments made to retailers to facilitate sales, account for 41 percent of the total expenditure on cigarette marketing. Cigarette marketing is bolder and more aggressive in developing countries than it is in the developed world. Cigarette advertising on television and radio is common, and a variety of other venues are exploited. These include sports, arts, pop, fashion and street events, adventure tours, contests, give-aways and the internet.

There are also the hidden advertisements such as the placement of cigarette smoking and tobacco products in films. In addition there is sponsorship of universities, good-will donations for community events, and advertising of other goods and products bearing the cigarette name. Such marketing is seen throughout both the developed and the developing world.