

PHILIP MORRIS INTERNATIONAL (PMI)

Creating a smoke-free future with PMI

Philip Morris International (PMI) is a leading international tobacco company, with a diverse workforce of around 77,000 employees who hail from every corner of the globe.



Tracing its history to nineteenth-century London, the company has been around for more than 100 years. But today, it is experiencing the biggest shift in the industry's history. PMI is now dedicated to a mission which it describes as "dramatic": replacing cigarettes with smoke-free products. This new and bold mission is rooted in the belief that, whilst the best option for smokers is to quit completely and for non-smokers not to start at all, less harmful alternatives should be made available to consumers who do. In order to achieve this mission, PMI has more than 400 scientists, engineers and technicians working round the clock, and the company has invested more than USD\$6 billion to date in developing less harmful alternatives to cigarettes.

Singapore is particularly important to PMI's vision of a smoke-free future. Since 2010, Singapore has been home to one of the company's two global R&D facilities dedicated to the development and scientific assessment of smoke-free alternatives. In addition, the company runs a direct sales and distribution operation in Singapore since 1998, even though PMI's brands have been on the market here for many years, and Singapore is also a base for PMI's operations in duty-free.

A CHANGING INDUSTRY AND A CHANGING COMPANY

PMI is evolving and it is committed to change. Their renewed mission is to become the driver of disruption in an industry which has been relatively unchanged for the past decades, moving from a traditional tobacco company to a technology-driven, consumer-centric and science-based company. This move is centred around a common-sense approach: according to the World Health Organisation, over a billion people will smoke in 2025, despite campaigns to quit. While PMI firmly believes that there is no substitute for quitting, the company wishes to have a big impact on public health by offering adult smokers who would otherwise continue to smoke cigarettes better alternatives. PMI sees it as giving a choice to adult smokers who are looking for less harmful alternatives to smoking. The end goal? – to create a smoke-free future for their customers, their company, their shareholders and society at large.

PMI's 2018 Sustainability Report outlines the ways in which the company is truly accelerating efforts to accomplish their smoke-free vision. The aim is to reduce smoking among PMI consumers more than four times fast-

er than the target set by the World Health Organisation. PMI's aspiration is that at least 40 million people who would otherwise have smoked cigarettes will have switched to PMI's smoke-free products by 2025, reducing the total number of PMI cigarette smokers by 55 million.

Through intensive research and development, PMI has created a breakthrough heated tobacco system, which in many countries around the world offers smokers who continue to consume tobacco, as a better option to cigarettes. The heated tobacco system heats tobacco rather than burning it, therefore eliminating the smoke and reducing the number of harmful and potentially harmful constituents by 95% compared to cigarette smoking.

SINGAPORE AT THE CENTRE OF CHANGE

Singapore is truly at the centre of PMI's bold and ambitious vision of a smoke-free future. Established in 2010, the Singapore R&D facility has approximately 90 employees, including 68 Singapore nationals, with expertise across various fields of science and engineering. This includes chemical and biomedical engineering, and life sciences specialities in



inhalation sciences, toxicology, cancer research, neurobiology, molecular biology, analytical chemistry, systems biology and bioimaging. The conducive business environment, Singapore's push in the area of biomedical science, technology and innovation as well as the talent pool and expertise available here has made it an attractive choice to set up their R&D facility.

PMI in Singapore also sees an immense opportunity in harnessing the benefits of digital technologies to better serve their retailers. They are committed to innovate constantly and improve their order system in order to create a pleasant and convenient experience for retailers. With this in mind, PMI intends to progressively introduce an e-commerce platform to provide retailers with more autonomy in their ordering experi-

ence. Singapore serves as a strong base to support this initiative with its technologically literate population, high mobile penetration rate and robust IT infrastructure. Indeed, in the area of e-commerce, it is estimated that 73% of the population has purchased a product or service online before.

In being interviewed for this article, PMI's company spokesperson, Anthea Jackson, wished to conclude the article on this note: "we share the vision of Singapore being a Smart Nation, a leading economy powered by digital innovation and supported by evidence-based policy making."

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