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AN UNKNOWN PERSON WHO INITIATED decline of America's Tobacco industry

In the 1950s to 1970s, America's Tobacco/Smoking industry was doing outstanding business. While studies after studies were getting released to show that smoking causes lung cancer,

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but due to the vast advertising power of Tobacco companies, people were still not taking the dangers of smoking seriously. The tobacco lobby was proving to be too strong to get controlled by the govt.

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When everyone thought it was tough to fight, suddenly an unknown lawyer used an obscure legal clause in 1967 to end the massive advertising by the Tobacco companies in a single shot.

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And that obscure legal clause was the 'fairness doctrine of 1949', which states that any public broadcasting media would have to show both for and against points information on a controversial topic.

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So, American Public was liable to always get balance information from the media on a controversial topic.

Taking this clause, this unknown lawyer John Banzhaf filed a case in American courts that as Smoking is a controversial topic,

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any TV/Radio channel running pro-smoking ad should also run anti-smoking ads for the same length of time. This will ensure that the public gets the complete information before choosing to indulge in smoking. He invoked the 'Fairness Doctrine of 1949'.

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Tobacco companies gave their all in court to say that this infringes their freedom of expression. But the court, after assessing the merit, decided that Mr John is right and TV/Radio channels have to show both types of Positive and Negative ads on smoking.

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One cannot go with other.

Various anti-cancer organisations waiting for the opportunity to end the brute advertising powers of Tobacco companies jumped on this decision.

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They ran an equal amount of anti-smoking ads filled with lung cancer images, footage of people dying with lung cancer and appeals of actors infected with lung cancer asking people to quit smoking.

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This resulted in heavy damage to the positive image of smoking among people and sales dropped.

Watching this, Tobacco companies then decided never to run any TV/Radio pro-smoking ads as this also stopped the anti-smoking ads (again, the same clause got used).

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This way, the decline of America's Tobacco industry started in the 1970s, which then contributed to saving lots of lives that could have been lost due to lung cancer caused by smoking.

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