



September 11, 2019

22<sup>nd</sup> Century Group, Inc.

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8560 Main St

Williamsville, NY 14221

Dear (b) (4), (b) (6)

In response to FDA questions regarding the amendment to MRTPAs (MR0000159-MR0000160) (M/A/R/C<sup>®</sup> Research 2018, “Quantitative Study to Evaluate VLN Hypothetical Product Messages Among U.S. Adult Cigarette Smokers, Adult Former Cigarette Smokers and Adult Never Cigarette Users”; Protocol Number: 5180080-VLN-B2; Principal Investigator: Randall Wahl) containing clarifying information about the stimuli participants were assigned to view in the VLN Control packaging group (referred to in the report as “VLN No Messaging – Control 1”), M/A/R/C<sup>®</sup> Research, LLC has completed investigation of the issues noted by FDA including:

- Original stimuli submitted
- Stimuli submitted in the August 28, 2019 amendment

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#### **Investigation Findings**

M/A/R/C<sup>®</sup> Research, LLC conducted a thorough review of all stimuli materials, the questionnaire instrument, the survey programming and all supporting documentation. We have concluded that the stimuli viewed by participants are accurately depicted in the original files submitted with MRTPAs (MR0000159-MR0000160),

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[Redacted content]

The 3D images, VLN M - 3D - Cell 4.pdf and VLN R - 3D - Cell 4.pdf, depicted a blank pack with no text other than the brand text/logo, Surgeon General's Warning and manufacturer information as was described in the project protocol.

(b) (4) the flat images (b) (4) contained part of the messaging described as VLN's Disclaimer and Back of Pack Language:

- Disclaimer (same on all packs)
  - Nicotine is addictive. Less nicotine does NOT mean safer. All cigarettes can cause disease and death.
- Back of Pack Language (same on all packs)
  - VLN™ smells, burns, and tastes like a conventional cigarette, but greatly reduces your nicotine consumption.

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(b) (4) full listing of all project stimuli and locations within the project appendix folders is provided on page 4.

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It is clear that the open-ended data is consistent with exposure to messaging about lower or reduced nicotine in the respondent cell in question. Because the open-end data was used solely to ensure cognition (respondent understanding of the messaging) and retention (respondents could recall the messaging accurately), only the Test Cells where packs had both Primary and Secondary claim messaging were analyzed and reported.

The open-ended data for the Control cells was not analyzed for the report, as there was no comparative analysis required between the control and test cells on this dimension.

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(b) (4) VLN No Messaging – Control 1 should be disregarded and removed from the report. For the purposes of MRTPA submission, comparison to Marlboro Gold is also a more relevant and realistic measure of marketplace perceptions given that it is a universally known, established cigarette brand.

If VLN No Messaging – Control 1 is removed and only Marlboro Gold – Control 2 is used, there is no meaningful impact on the study’s conclusions regarding the modified exposure messaging that was tested and the results still successfully demonstrate that, as the labeling and marketing of the product were tested in this research, consumers will not be misled into believing that the product is or has been demonstrated to be less harmful or presents or has been demonstrated to present less of a risk of disease than one or more other commercially marketed tobacco products.

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Sincerely,

Brad Seipel  
Senior Vice President, Group Director, Account Management  
M/A/R/C® Research, LLC

c: Randy Wahl, (b) (6)

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(b) (4) [Redacted]

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