

GTC looks to chew into low-tobacco cigarette market

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As it prepares for the launch of another low tobacco cigarette in international markets, GTC Industries is betting big on its recently launched Loe Tabac brand. The company is targeting 10 per cent share in the country's Rs 25,000-crore cigarette market by 2008 for the Loe Tabac brand of cigarettes. The Sanjay Dalmia Group company claims that Loe Tabac cigarettes contain 25 per cent less tobacco than the conventional cigarettes.

According to Amar Sinha, director - sales and marketing, GTC, the company will focus on low tobacco products as a key growth area. The company has also developed another brand of cigarettes that contains 50 per cent less tobacco than the conventional ones.

"We are going to introduce the latest brand in the overseas markets in the next couple of months," Sinha said, adding that the company's aim was to become a key global player in innovating tobacco products.

In this regard, GTC would augment growth through organic and inorganic routes while Loe Tabac brand would increase the company's global presence. The company currently has a 40 per cent market share in the mini-cigarette (kings category) segment, Sinha told mediapersons here on Tuesday.

Interestingly, a couple of months back, a website www.LowTobacLife.com ran an outdoor campaign in Mumbai. The bus shelters in the city which carried a prominent message, "High on excitement. Low on risk" showed various images from motor sports, to an early morning jog. But not everyone was happy with the fitness sermons.

Tobacco major, GTC industries dragged the website to court as it was not just the ads which sounded like an anti-smoking tirade. Even the site's name was similar to GTC's low tobacco cigarette, Loe Tabac.

Company executives said that the case was due for hearing. "The matter is sub-judice. We can't comment on it," said a GTC executive. The website executives were unavailable for comment.