

A CLEAN SLATE

Bond Street's heat-not-burn technology aims to overcome some of the limitations associated with reconstituted tobacco.

By Joseph Matus Fuisz

Heat-not-burn tobacco is a relatively mature segment that is finally getting attention. This is attributable to several drivers, including an increasing desire for products with reduced toxicants relative to combustibles, the success of the vapor industry (pointing to previously underestimated consumer demand for combustible alternatives) and an increasing understanding of the types of alternative products that engage adult smokers.



Philip Morris International's (PMI) iQOS is the most remarkable tobacco product launch in living memory. IQOS has achieved a success in Japan—admittedly a nonvapor market—that is the envy of the sector. PMI achieved this by dedication to a platform—the electronic heating of a specialized reconstituted tobacco sheet—that had negligible consumer success in its Accord and Heatbar variants. British American Tobacco has now rushed to join the party with Glo, which follows this same reconstituted tobacco approach.

At our company, Bond Street, we view the reconstituted tobacco approach as counterintuitive. Why lock up components—intended to be aerosolized—in a solid sheet matrix? Moreover, this approach (like any) has inherent limitations. Because reconstituted tobacco sheet requires specific mechanical properties, and because of the nature of film and sheet formulation, there are practical limits on the amounts of glycerin (vapor agent) and flavor that can be included. Moreover, there is the possibility to get unwanted flavor notes from the excipients (typically cellulosic polymer) needed to make the sheet.

That iQOS receives such positive consumer feedback is a tribute to the strong evolutionary work of its product developers. Akin to the Porsche 911's inherently challenging rear-engine architecture, the platform underlying iQOS has been coaxed to product excellence despite the peculiar reconstituted tobacco sheet approach.

At Bond Street, we approach the heat-not-burn space from a clean page: Our solution is to employ a wax partition taken from a cured tobacco blend. The wax partition brings over the rich flavors of the blend and nicotine—the elements that consumers want and that make adults enjoy tobacco. This wax partition is mixed with vapor agents and, optionally, with flavors. The patent-pending process and compositions have no unwanted flavor notes because all the components inherently taste good. Nontobacco excipients are solely present for flavor and additional vapor—i.e., to enhance the user experience—not for mechanical properties.

In addition to rich tobacco and other flavors, the Bond Street wax approach compositionally affords unlimited vapor and unlimited flavor. Nicotine levels are controlled as well, from 0.5 percent to 6 percent. Because the composition does not need to be formed into a sheet, new compositions can be readily created.

Perhaps most interesting is the preservation of the blender's art in the new field of next-generation heat-not-burn tobacco products. Whether making a cigar wax, a combustible replacement or a shisha-type product, the craft of tobacco blending comes through in high fidelity.

Bond Street views its wax platform as having broad potential in various tobacco channels, including combustible cigarette alternatives, cigar alternatives, shisha and blunt-style products.

Our combustible alternative is called iPek, from the Greek “κερί,” meaning wax. IPek is a modern lifestyle brand to compete in the heat-not-burn space for adult cigarettes. The cigarette blend will be sold in Nespresso-style pods that are used in a personal vaporizer. Taste, vapor product and nicotine delivery all compare favorably with the competitive set, as confirmed by sensory evaluation. IPek is offered in tobacco, menthol and adult flavors.

Our cigar alternative is sold under the Havana Wax brand. Bond Street recognizes the challenge of successfully selling heat-not-burn products into this channel that is so deeply

committed to flavor and experience—an as yet unprecedented step. Yet we believe the rich flavor of our wax platform makes the cigar market too enticing to pass up.

Govern's is directed to the sophisticated hookah user. With an ingredient listing nearly identical to shisha (minus the nonvaporizable molasses) our heavily flavored Govern's should be a dream for the shisha fan heretofore tethered to her shisha pipe and unimpressed by nonsensical attempts to rebadge vapor products as e-hookah.

Our Blunt wax brand is geared to the blunt smoker who wants to enjoy a blunt experience in a contemporary vapor/wax pen.

We believe the future for Bond Street is bright in the exciting trail being blazed by iQOS and Glo around the globe. For a small independent manufacturer, navigating the global markets for heat-not-burn products across multiple channels is a substantial undertaking. We think we've chosen the right page to start from, and we are looking forward to the road ahead. **TR**

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Images courtesy of Bond Street

Bond Street employs a wax partition taken from a cured tobacco blend.

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