

Global ad watchdogs toughen up on offensive advertising

 By [Chris Mberdyk](#) 17 Jun 2009

If the level of pettiness of complaints to the world's advertising standards authorities is anything to go by, the world's consumers are certainly getting a lot more sensitive about what they see in advertising.

And as a result, more and more ads that world have quite easily have passed muster 20 years ago are now being hauled off TV and cinema screens and out of newspapers and magazines.

A quick check on the Internet produced a list of 15 of the world's most "offensive, banned and rejected" advertisements. Admittedly, some of them are decidedly tacky and make no marketing sense whatsoever clearly just designed to be shocking for shock's sake.

Judge for yourself

But, the majority would probably not have raised a single eyebrow 20 years ago. Have a look at the ads below and judge for yourself.

The big question, of course, is this:

Are advertising standards watchdogs simply getting stricter and a lot more conservative or are consumers really a lot more sensitive these days?

And if the latter is the case, is it just a question of a tiny minority of over-eager Mother Grundies trying to dictate to dictate levels of morality on behalf of the majority or do those few, who complain so bitterly and sometimes from a position of such pettiness, actually represent the opinion of the majority?



Bacardi - Canada -
Banned as it
"objectified and

dermeaned women"
(ASC)

[click to enlarge](#)



Kiss Tobacco - Israel - Banned
as it contains "obscenity and
ressemblance of human
beings"

[click to enlarge](#)



Paddy Power - Ireland -
Banned as "the betting odds
referred to each woman's
chances of either being
knocked down by the truck
were offensive and dermeaned

older people"

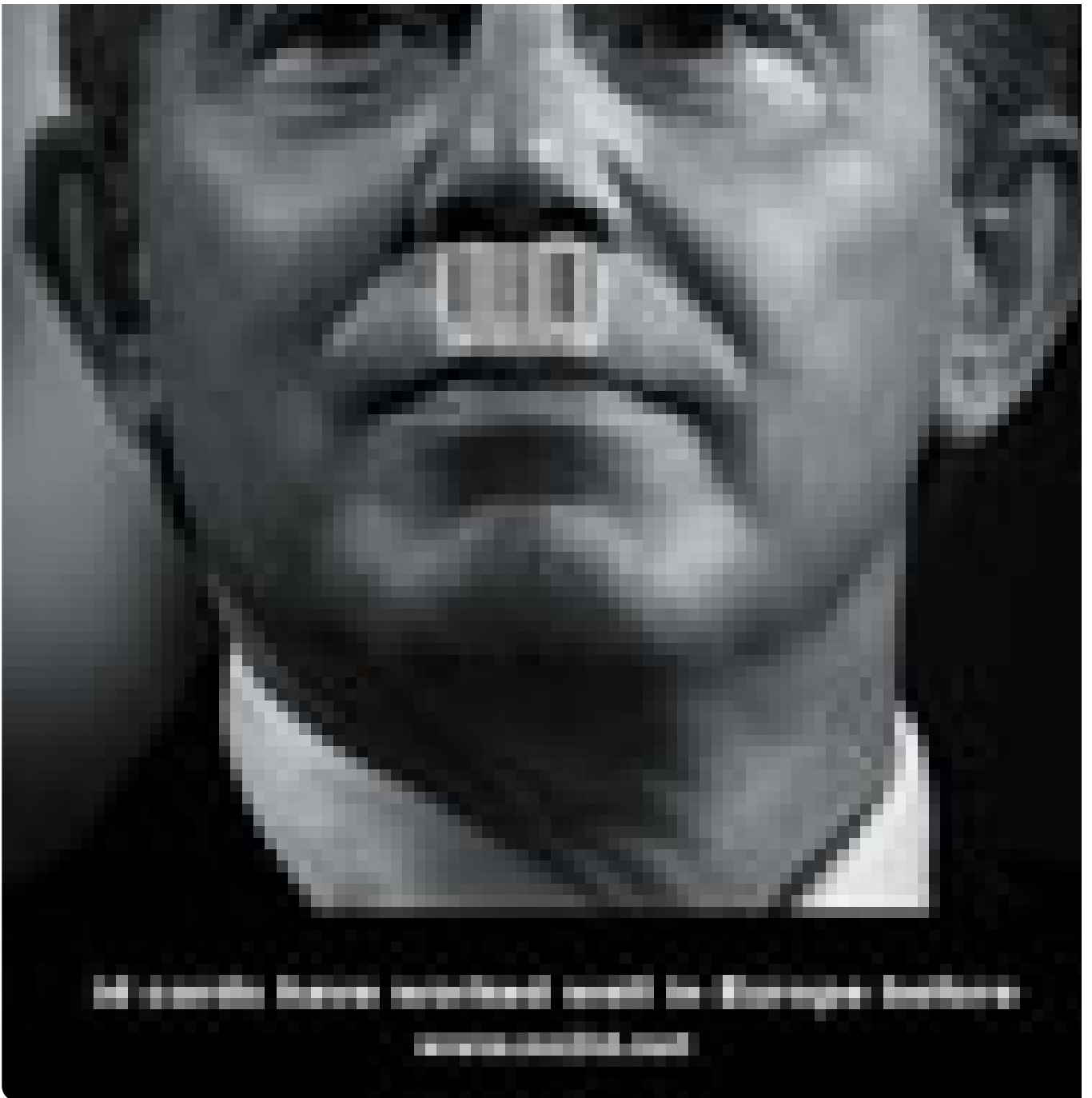
[click to enlarge](#)



Energizer - Chile - Rejected by the client

[click to enlarge](#)





NO2ID - UK - Mst
Complained as "the
barcode on Tony
Blair's upper lip
made him resemble
Hitler, which was
offensive"

[click to enlarge](#)



Killer Heels by NVA -

UK - Banned as it
"trivialised and
stylised violence"

[click to enlarge](#)



Department of Health - UK -
Banned as it can "frighten and
distress children"

[click to enlarge](#)



Gucci - UK - Banned

[click to enlarge](#)



Six Feet Under TV
Series - UK - Banned
as they were
"offensive, shocking
and likely to cause
undue distress"

[click to enlarge](#)



Diesel - UK - Banned as its "sexual image was likely to cause serious or widespread offence and was unsuitable in a magazine that could be seen by children"

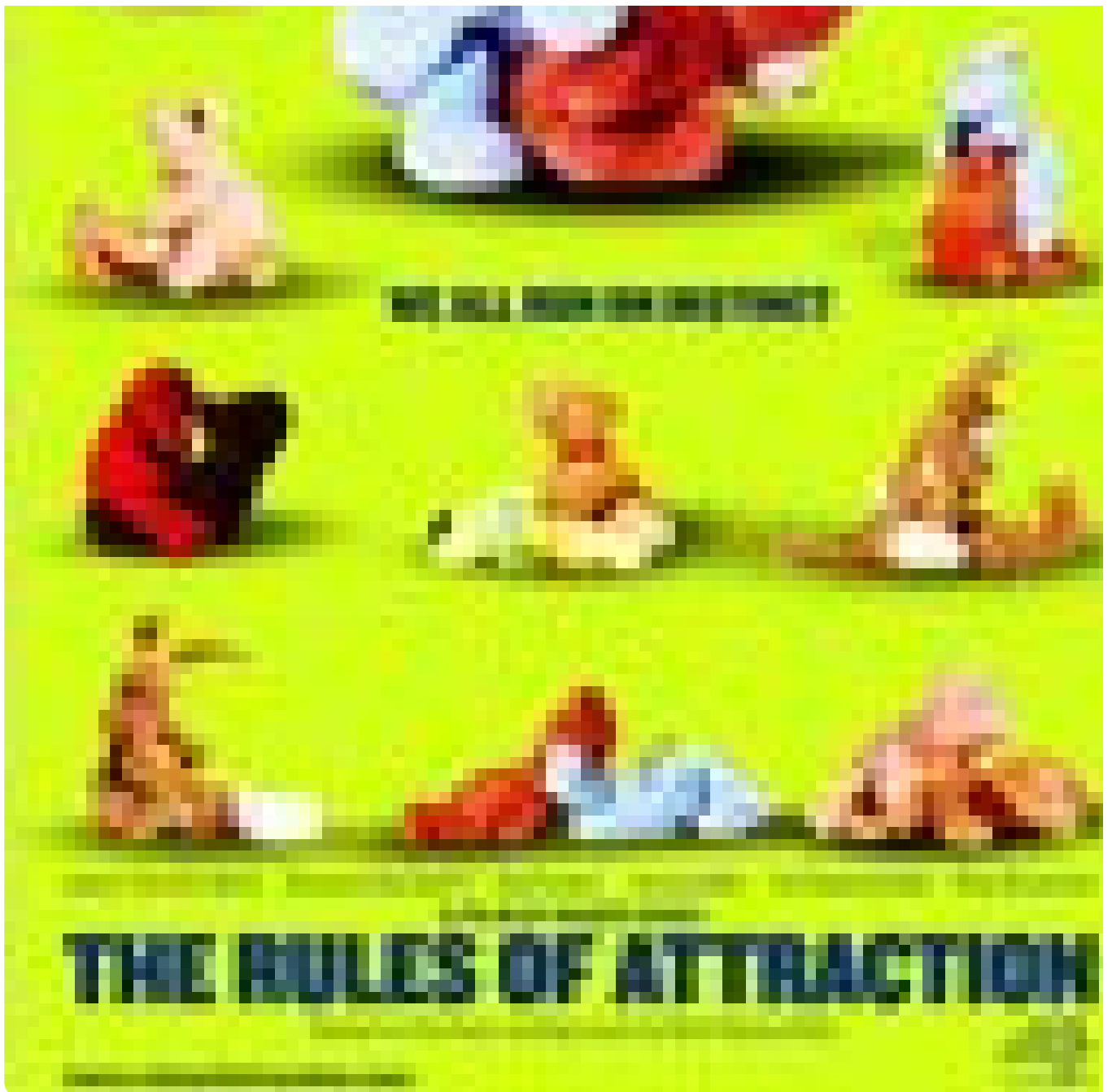
[click to enlarge](#)



Russian Finance Magazine - RUSSIA - Banned for being "immoral"

[click to enlarge](#)





The Rules of Attraction (movie) - USA - Banned as "the copulating toys were considered offensive and obscene"

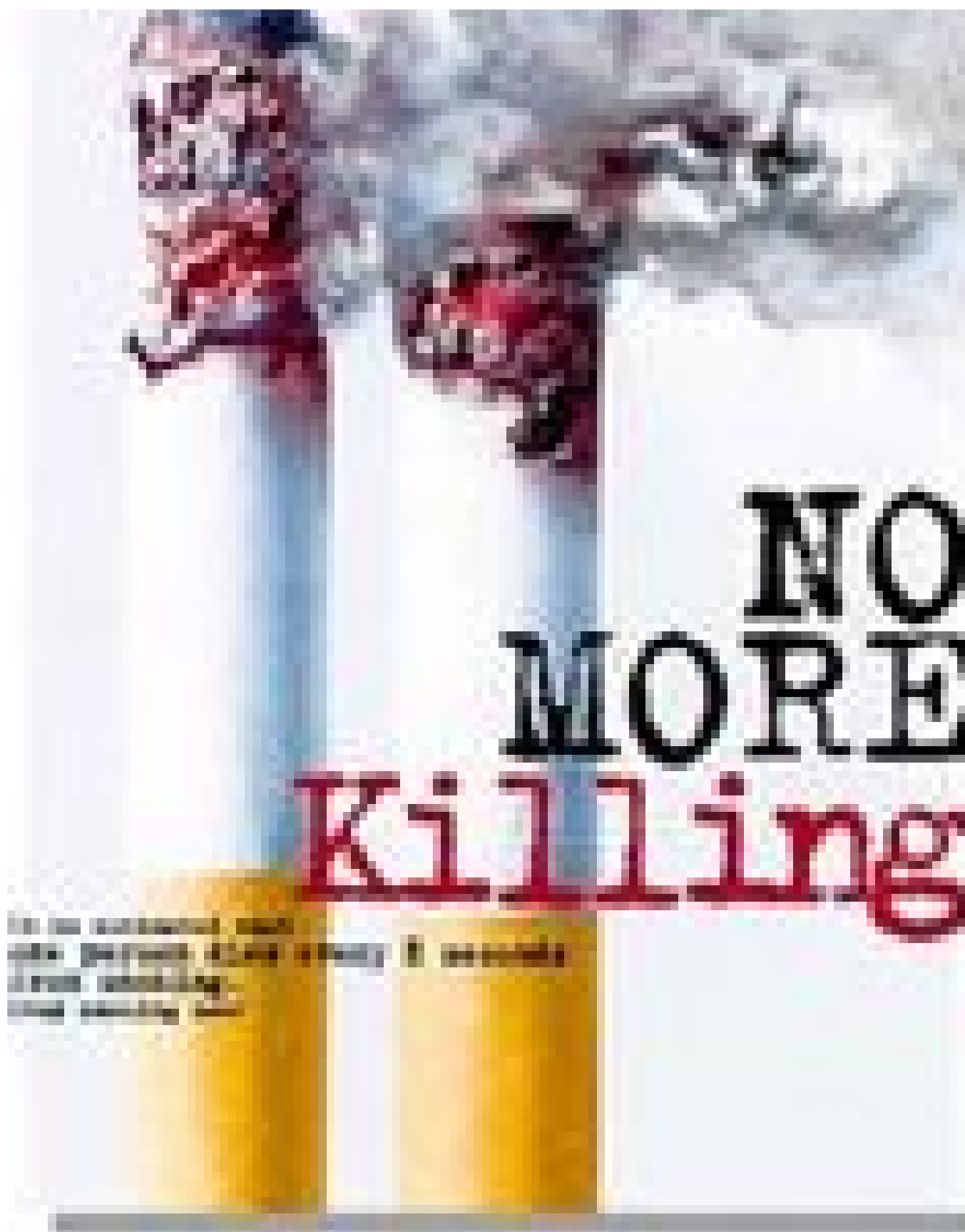
[click to enlarge](#)



TomFord - USA -
Most Complained as
"it was sexually

explicit"

[click to enlarge](#)



Towers Anti-Smoking Campaign - CHINA - Rejected as "inappropriate"

[click to enlarge](#)



The Breast Cancer
Fund - USA -
Rejected by
advertising spaces
run by Viacom*over

fears that its depiction
of mastectomy scars
would prove to be too
shocking to the
public"

[click to enlarge](#)

ABOUT CHRIS MOERDYK

Apart from being a corporate marketing analyst, advisor and media commentator, Chris Moerdyk is a former chairman of Bizcommunity. He was head of strategic planning and public af for BMW South Africa and spent 16 years in the creative and client service departments of ad agencies, ending up as resident director of Lindsay Smithers-FCB in KwaZulu-Natal. Em Chris on moerdykc@gmail.com and follow him on Twitter at [@chrismoerdyk](https://twitter.com/chrismoerdyk).
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