

# You are about to be banned!

 By [Chris Brewer](#)

8 May 2017

Of course we all know that the advertising bans of alcohol products is getting closer and closer.

Yet, curiously, the industry hasn't taken such a huge stance against the impending booze ban as I would have thought.



## Cabinet mulls crackdown on booze adverts

Asha Speckman 7 Jun 2016



Then again, it was the same with tobacco. I vividly recall a chap giving an impassioned speech to the Media Association many, many years ago (long before the ban came into effect) where he actually knelt on the floor and beseeched those there to take a stand **now!**

His main point was that it was the thin end of the wedge and that many more bans would follow. That's what 'government intervention' means after all.

I've written about this before, so before the loony liberals start sending me hate mail let me make myself clear... I am **not** in favour of smoking.

However, I am on the side of freedom of choice. I believe I have a sacred right to live my life as I wish, provided it doesn't involve anything illegal. Therefore, I chose to smoke for a long time – because to do so was, and still is, legal.



FoodandMore © – [123RF.com](http://123RF.com)

One of the most brilliant marketing/research minds in the country is a dear friend of mine and I spent a fascinating evening with him quite recently, where he postulated that the driving force behind the tobacco ban was the tobacco companies themselves! Think about how their profits have soared. It's too complex to go into detail here, but I assure you he has irresistible logic on his side.

I was on a TV debate a couple of years ago and there was a professor on the panel (whose name I cannot, for the life of me, remember) who went on and on and on about the evil effects of smoking and drinking alcohol. He maintained that the only way to stop “this scourge is the ban the advertising – and we have the proof that it works in the case of tobacco.”

When I had a chance to get a word in edgeways (this guy simply loved the sound of his own voice) I politely pointed out that, since the advertising ban, cigarette consumption had not effectively decreased. In fact, in some areas it had significantly increased, such as with 17-year-old girls – which annoyed him so much that his beard had lots of spittle on it from constantly interrupting me.

“We have the proof!” he said.

“No you don't,” I replied. “I have irrefutable research which proves it!”

“That is not true! Ours is **medical** research!” He folded his arms, looking pleased.

“Well mine is **consumer** research, following 35,000 face-to-face interviews, and regardless of what you *want* to believe, the simple fact is that the more you tell people not to smoke, the more they will.”

I think at that stage I said that it's generally believed that Adolf Hitler was the first major power to ban it – but that was cut from the final broadcast.

Also, I made the point about extremely poor evidence that only *hinted* at public safety issues regarding passive smoking – and it was very far from conclusive. That was cut, too.

I did concede that by making smoking **illegal** in certain areas was the most effective way, in my opinion, to reduce consumption. But that argument was shrugged off, too.

However, the facts remain that globally, after all the efforts of banning tobacco advertising and making it illegal in public places, the following has happened:

In 1981, using a modelled prevalence, age-standardised methodology in 187 countries, in 1980 41.2% of people smoked. In 2012 that had reduced to 31.1%. Perversely, in 1980 there were 967m smokers whereas in 2012 there were 989m. This is usually ascribed to population growth.

Believe that or believe it not. The fact that the anti-smoking brigade are now completely anti e-cigarettes tends to suggest to me that they've lost the plot a bit and become borderline spiteful obsessives in the process.

However, back to the interview. The professor was adamant that if a 12-year-old boy was watching a cricket match and he saw Jacques Kallis wearing a shirt with a Castle logo on it, then that child would be far more likely to start drinking – perhaps before the age of 18.

I laughed so much because it was ridiculous – but that was cut out, too.

Idiots.

Now the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has won a huge victory on the packaging of tobacco, alcohol and other unhealthy foods. The Australians are likely to lead the pack with the insistence of olive-green, drab packaging. South Africa will follow quite quickly, I'm sure – although smoking, still, is legal. That must really annoy the 'anti' brigade.

But it's so easy to ban things, isn't it?

Take cyclamates, for example – it's a non-nutritive sweetener and was used everywhere and in everything. Baked goods, confections, desserts, soft drinks, preservatives and salad dressings.

Then, in 1966, "scientific studies" were conducted and they linked cyclamates to cancerous tumours in the bladders of rats. This led to a public outcry and the immediate banning of the stuff in many, many countries – especially in the US.

What everyone casually overlooked was the fact that only 8 of the 240 rats tested developed cancer and that was after being force-fed the human equivalent of 350 cans of diet sodas **per day**.

Subsequent research failed to demonstrate their carcinogenic properties. This led to re-approval of their use in many countries yet cyclamates remain **banned** in the US to this day.

Suggestions that the original studies were financed by the powerful sugar industry were strenuously denied, even though it sounds plausible.

So, whilst we can still get saccharin here (I think), tobacco advertising is banned and may even become illegal and alcohol will follow.

I always thought that junk food would be the next in line for banning but I didn't foresee the sudden rise in interest in cannabis – about which nobody, it seems, can agree whether it's legal or not. Now that's a story to watch!



Weed has been legalised? No, not quite...

Shan Raddcliffe 31 Mar 2017



---

In the meantime, tobacco advertising is banned but smoking is not. Attention will certainly now turn to banning booze ads – but fall short of banning it as an illegal substance.

It's an interesting thought that should government imitate what they did with smoking in some public areas (and bars). Can

you imagine in the future, walking into a pub only to see a sign that says '*No alcohol to be consumed here*'? Then you'd have to take your drinks outside and join the smokers in the rain.

But give the government and the loony lefts some time and we'll become a society of non-smoking, non-drinking, non-hamburger eating and certainly **no** caffeine!

It wouldn't surprise me if knitting is eventually banned.

Sigh.

*\*Note that Bizcommunity staff and management do not necessarily share the views of its contributors – the opinions and statements expressed herein are solely those of the author.\**

## ABOUT CHRIS BREWER

Having joined the ad industry in London, Chris Brewer spent most of his career in media analysis and planning - but has performed just about every advertising task from Creative to Research. He's an honorary lifetime member of the Advertising Media Association and regularly advises agencies and clients regarding their media plan costs and strategies. He is also often asked to talk at industry functions. Email: [chris@brewers.co.za](mailto:chris@brewers.co.za). Twitter: [@brewersapps](https://twitter.com/brewersapps). Read his blog: [www.brewersdroop.co.za](http://www.brewersdroop.co.za)

- Welcome to the latest Monty Python fiasco - 21 May 2020
- Is digital advertising worth all the hype? - 4 Dec 2017
- TV we got right - 20 Nov 2017
- Innuendo and the power of the pen - 6 Nov 2017
- When was the sale lost? - 23 Oct 2017

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>