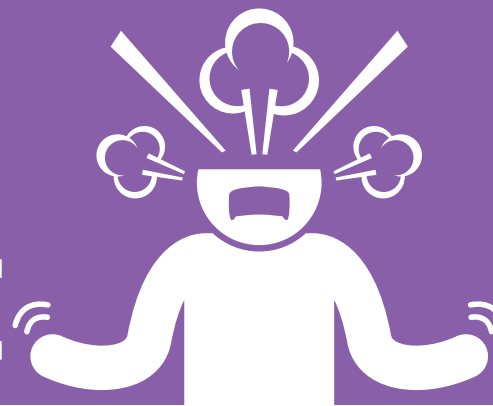


# OFFENSIVENESS IN ADVERTISING QUICK GUIDE



New Zealanders don't like offensive advertising and it is one of the ASA's most complained about issues. Content that is indecent, exploitative, degrading or harmful is considered offensive. Skip the drama with our top tips:

## 01 BIG PICTURE

While offence is often subjective, consider the context, medium, audience and product when making creative and placement decisions. You may find the overall advertising message is quite different from what you intended.

## 02 WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE

Avoid issues by checking the [BSA research on the most offensive words](#) before you write your ad. The acceptability of words can change over time, so make sure you're up to date on this or do your own survey.

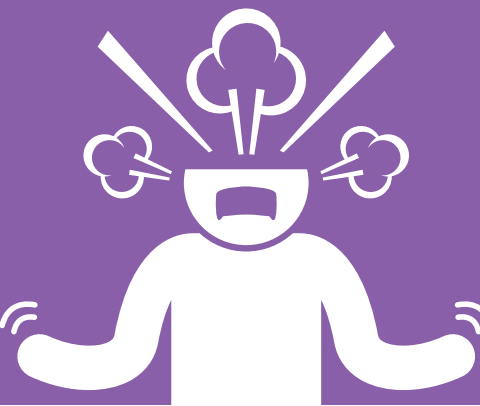
## 03 WHO COULD SEE IT?

Your target audience may not be the only people who will see your ad. Consider whether it is likely to offend people on a large or widespread scale or if it could seriously offend a small number of people.

## 04 CONSIDER CURRENT SOCIETAL VALUES

Have societal values changed so that what may have been OK before is not OK now?

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## 05

### THINK ABOUT THE CONTEXT

How will your ad be understood by the audience? While your intention may be light-hearted, humour will not necessarily prevent offence.



## 06

### DON'T PERPETUATE HARMFUL STEREOTYPES

While stereotypes can be an easy shorthand for messaging, negative stereotypes that demean or ridicule groups or individuals are likely to be considered offensive or harmful. Societal rejection of any form of stereotyping is growing.



## 07

### SEXUAL IMAGERY OR LANGUAGE

Sexual imagery or language must be appropriate to the audience and medium. Sexual depictions of people may only be used to advertise relevant products or services and must be carefully targeted.



## 08

### KNOW THE POSSIBLE GROUNDS FOR OFFENCE

Some of the grounds for offence may be:  
gender; race; colour; ethnic or national origin; age; cultural, religious, political or ethical belief; sexual orientation; gender identification; marital status; family status; disability; occupational or employment status.