

# Ad experts call for global initiative to adopt and support self-regulation

IAA 2006 Dubai, UAE: At the 40th Annual Congress of the International Advertising Association in Dubai, a gathering of 2000 delegates and advertising industry leaders representing the \$400 billion global marketing community, a panel of experts on self-regulation called for a global initiative to adopt and support self-regulation, rather than allow governments to step in and impose unnecessary commercial speech restrictions that could cripple an advertisers' ability to truthfully market products and services.

Chaired by CNN International anchor Becky Anderson, the IAA panel industry experts: Carla Michelotti, EVP, General Counsel of Leo Burnett Worldwide); Douglas Wood, partner in Reed Smith LLP and chairman and founder of the Global Advertising Lawyers Alliance; and Jacques Bille, IAA vice president for EU Affairs, applauded the self regulation that exists around the world, but also warned the industry that governments are too often inappropriately targeting advertising as attempting to address societal issues. Although "ad bans do not work", advertising too often becomes the scapegoat in efforts to address problems such as obesity in children, alcohol abuse, and indecency, due to governments mistakenly concluding that advertising and marketing is the cause of such complex societal issues.

In addition to the advertising self regulation that exists in dozens of markets around the world, Michelotti asserted that "the International Chamber of Commerce enactment of the 'ICC Framework for Responsible Food and Beverage Communications' is further evidence of the strong commitment by multinational advertisers to establishing a platform of self regulation for food and beverage advertising, even in those countries where such self regulatory guidelines are not in existence."

## Responsible marketing practices

"Self Regulation starts at home," Michelotti explained. "Self regulatory mechanisms are only a part of the fabric of self regulation in the industry." Michelotti went on to report that many in the industry are promoting self initiated responsible marketing practices in addition to those established through industry self regulation.

Wood warned that absent self-regulation... "marketers in the United States will face the 'perfect storm' where innumerable anti-advertising groups and regulators become unified in their attacks. We've never seen a convergence of so many negative forces before and they are gaining momentum. It's critical that the marketing industry embrace an aggressive self-regulatory system, building on the infrastructure that already exists in many countries. Marketers must recognize that it is better to aggressively and creatively regulate oneself, even at the expense of some freedoms currently enjoyed, than it is to be told how to behave by legislators and regulators, often interested more in votes than fairness".

## Act quickly

Bille shared the complex details of the self-regulatory mechanisms in Europe and the current state of their development across the single market. He emphasized the need for the European industry to continue to act quickly to forestall the stated threats to advertising if self-regulation were not proven "to work".

Bille told the audience that it was "up to us" to address the looming and immediate crisis. He applauded the work of the EASA and the self-regulatory organizations (SRO's) throughout Europe during this time of industry change and crisis.

As the Vice President of Self Regulation and Government Affairs for the IAA, Michelotti reported that the IAA has been and remains committed to assuring that advertising is truthful, and legal and that the industry have strong, efficient and well funded systems of self regulation to deliver on that commitment."

For further information on the IAA, please visit [www.iaaglobal.org](http://www.iaaglobal.org).

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