

# **Advertising in Thailand: Historical Development and PSAs**

**A Special Lecture at TCC Advertising College**

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# Thank you TCC's Advertising College

I would like to thank TCC's Advertising College for this warm welcome. I am honored to share with you my knowledge of the Thai advertising industry, as well as my own perspectives and observations on how the 'affairs' of advertising are changing in the Kingdom of Thailand.

# Outline

About this Lecture

About Me

About Thailand

My Talk on Ads

Discussions (Qs and As)

# **About this Lecture**

- 1. The Historical Development of Thai Advertising**
- 2. Public Service Advertisements (PSAs) in Thailand**

## About Me

**Janpha Thadphoothon graduated with a bachelor's degree, First-Class Honors, in Education from Chulalongkorn University (CU) in 1992. In 2000, he graduated with a master's degree in Industrial and Organizational Psychology (IO Psychology) from Thammasat University (TU), Bangkok. In 1999, he also received an advanced certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) from RELC, Singapore. He holds a Doctorate in Education from the University of Canberra (UC), Australia. In 2023, he completed with honors Stanford University's online course "Writing in the Sciences" and earned a certificate. Dr. Janpha Thadphoothon is an assistant professor at Dhurakij Pundit University, at Faculty of Arts in Bangkok, Thailand.**

# Disclaimers

While I don't claim to be an advertising expert, I am excited to facilitate this knowledge-sharing session with you. Learning is most effective when it is an **active process**; therefore, I invite you to share your unique opinions and professional experiences throughout our discussion.

Please remember that in our rapidly changing world, information is never static—what we know today is simply a foundation for what we will discover tomorrow.

# Advertising: Definition

*Any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of goods, services, or ideas by an identified sponsor*

**Reference:** Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2021). *Principles of marketing* (18th ed.). Pearson.

# About Advertising

**Advertising** is the practice and techniques used to bring attention to a product, service, brand, or cause through paid communication.

It is a strategic tool designed to persuade, inform, or influence a target audience to respond in a specific way, such as making a purchase, attending an event, or supporting a mission. (Wikipedia)

# Traditional Media (Analog/Offline) & Digital Media (Online/New Media)

## 1. Traditional Media (Analog/Offline)

This category relies on one-way communication and mass reach.

- **Print:** Newspapers, magazines, flyers.
- **Broadcast:** Linear TV and Terrestrial Radio.
- **Out-of-Home (OOH):** Static billboards, transit ads, posters
- **Direct Mail:** Physical catalogs or postcards.

## 2. Digital Media (Online/New Media)

This category relies on data-driven targeting and two-way interaction.

- **Social Media:** Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, LinkedIn.
- **Search (SEM):** Google Ads, Bing.
- **Video Streaming:** YouTube, Netflix/Hulu ads, Twitch.
- **Display/Programmatic:** Banners on websites and apps.
- **Email & SMS:** Direct digital communication.

# Omnichannel

Reaching consumers through multiple platforms (TV, Social Media, Billboards) simultaneously.

# About Thailand

A kingdom in SE with the population of about 70 million people.

Thailand is a **constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system**, where the King is head of state and a Prime Minister serves as head of government.

The country has the land area of approx 513,120 square kilometers (about the size of France and twice the size of the UK) bordering Laos and Myanmar to the north, Malaysia to the south, and Cambodia to the east.

# Ads in Thailand



# About Thailand (Siam)



Thai (or Siamese) is the national language of Thailand. It is a tonal, Kra-Dai language with five distinct tones (middle, low, falling, high, rising) that determine word meaning.

The language uses its own unique script containing 44 consonants and 32 vowel forms.

# Early Advertising (AD 1845)

Began in 1845 with the publication of *The Bangkok Recorder* by American missionary Dr Bradley, featuring simple, informative notices for products



Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Bangkok\\_Recorder](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Bangkok_Recorder)

# หนังสือจดหมายเหตุ

THE BANGKOK RECORDER.

Vol. 1. No. 1. Bangkok, March 1-1 1865. No. 1.

The Bangkok Recorder.

Vol. 1

ฉบับที่ ๑๖๖๖...  
ฉบับที่ ๑๖๖๗...  
ฉบับที่ ๑๖๖๘...  
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ฉบับที่ ๑๖๘๐...

## หนังสือราย

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ฉบับที่ ๑๖๖๗...  
ฉบับที่ ๑๖๖๘...  
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ฉบับที่ ๑๖๘๐...

## Early Advertising (1924)

Professionalization occurred in 1924 when Prince Kamphaengphet Akkayothin, known as the "Father of Thai Radio," established the first local agency, Siam Advertising Co., Ltd..

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purachatra\\_Jayakara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purachatra_Jayakara)



# Impacts

## From "Proclamations" to "Persuasion" (The Shift in *Doing*)

Before 1924, "advertising" in Thailand was mostly **State Proclamations** (Royal Gazettes) or basic information.

- **The Change:** Prince Kamphaengphet, who was educated at Harrow and Cambridge, imported the **UK Model** of advertising.
- **The Result:** For the first time, advertising became a **deliberate business strategy**. It shifted from merely "announcing" to "persuading" consumers.

## The Rise of Brand Image (1960s)

Influenced by global trends, Thai advertisers began moving away from simple "informational" ads toward building a specific Brand Image to differentiate products in a growing market



Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purachatra\\_Jayakara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purachatra_Jayakara)

ทุกครั้งที่คุณหล่อได้เรื่อง เพราะ  
ความชื่น ทอกก็เอา **บริบูรณบาล์ม**  
ทาให้ แล้วสอนว่า....



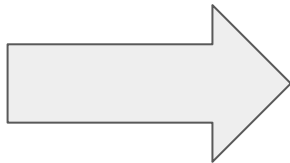
ใช้จัง...

**บริบูรณบาล์ม**

ดีทีสุด....  
เหนือกว่าคำโฆษณาใดๆ



บริษัท **บริบูรณไฮล์** จำกัด  
ถนนเฟื่องนคร กรุงเทพฯ โทร. 20981



สดชื่นระรื่นทวย ด้วย  
**โลฟบอยซ์**



เมื่อคุณเห็นคเห็นชอบ  
เห็นด้วยมาทั้งวัน

สุขอนามัยอย่างแท้จริงทำให้คุณสดชื่นทันที  
ฟองอันมากมายของโลฟบอยซ์จะซัด -  
เช็ดโคลนที่ติดอยู่เกลี้ยงเกลางด 2 ครั้งต่อวัน  
ต้นตอแห่งความสกปรก สุขสบายโลฟบอยซ์  
ก็จะทำให้คุณ... สดชื่น มีชีวิตชีวา ใค  
อย่างนี้มาทีไรบรรดาคนรัก

สดชื่นตลอดเวลา ใช้ **โลฟบอยซ์** เป็นประจำ



# The Transformation of Consumer Goods

- **The "Before" (1920s-1950s):** A soap advertisement would simply be a text block stating the price and the fact that it "cleans skin and kills germs".
- **The "After" (1960s):** Influenced by global trends, a brand like **Lux** began using "Movie Star" endorsements in Thailand. The focus shifted from "This is soap" to "This is the beauty secret of stars," building a **Brand Image** of glamour rather than just utility.

# Lux Ad



ดวงใจ ทศกัณฐ์  
ดาราทองเพชร  
ผู้พิชิตนาง ชวนหมอง

“ใช้ส力士พิเศษสิคะ แล้วคุณจะทำบว่า  
ทำไมดิฉันจึงใช้เป็นประจำ”

ลักส์พิเศษ  
ครีมบำรุงผิวในรูปสบู่

*Anda Winona*

A vintage Lux soap advertisement. The top half features a portrait of a woman with dark hair styled in a bun, wearing a blue dress and a pearl necklace. The bottom half shows a box of Lux soap with a woman's face on the label. The text is in Thai, including a testimonial and the brand name 'ลักส์พิเศษ' (Lux Special).



“ดิฉันใช้ครีมลักส์พิเศษบำรุงผิวทุกวัน  
จึงทำให้รู้สึกผิวสวย ผิวเนียน ผุดผ่องขึ้นเยอะ”

*ไพโรจน์ พิเศษพิเศษ*

ลักส์พิเศษ  
ครีมบำรุงผิวในรูปสบู่

ThaiMoviePosters\_A

A vintage Lux soap advertisement. The top half features a portrait of a woman wearing a wide-brimmed straw hat. The bottom half shows a box of Lux soap with a woman's face on the label. The text is in Thai, including a testimonial and the brand name 'ลักส์พิเศษ' (Lux Special).

## **The First Legal "Chains" (1967–1979)**

The era of "Wild West" freedom ended with the introduction of the **Medicine Act (1967)** and the **Food Act (1979)**, which legally required advertisers to prove their medical claims for the first time.

# Alcohol Ads (in the past) in Thailand



## What triggered the enactment of the law?

A series of public outcries over unsafe food, "miracle" medicine scams, and deceptive land development schemes in the mid-70s forced the government to realize that **the Civil and Commercial Code** was too slow and weak to protect the public.

# Consumer Protection Act (C.E. 2522 / 1979)

Focuses on *controlling* the truthfulness of the messages themselves

**Section 22** of the Consumer Protection Act. It strictly prohibits advertisements that contain "statements which are unfair to consumers or which may cause adverse effects to society as a whole."

## The Enforcement Body: The OCPB (สคบ.)

The **Office of the Consumer Protection Board (OCPB)**—known in Thai as **สคบ. (Sor-Kor-Bor)**—is the "referee."

**The Evolution:** While the 1979 Act is the foundation, it has been amended several times (most significantly in 1998 and 2019) to give the OCPB more "teeth" to handle modern issues like e-commerce and digital advertising.

# The Landscape of the Ad Industry (2026)

Thailand is not "strict" in the sense of a total ban, but rather in its **highly regulated and multi-layered oversight.**

# Three Steps to Go Public ( On Air)

## 1. The "Pre-Clearance" Chain (Broadcast)

For Television and Radio, Thailand has some of the strictest **Pre-Auditing** systems in the region.

- **The Process:** Before an ad is aired, it must be submitted to the **Censorship Board** (often coordinated through the TV Pool or NBTC).
- **The Focus:** They check for "Moral and Cultural Appropriateness." If an ad is too sexy, too violent, or disrespectful to national institutions, it is rejected before it even starts

## 2. The "Content" Chain (OCPB & Specialized Acts)

Even if an ad is "polite," it must follow strict technical laws managed by the **OCPB (Office of the Consumer Protection Board)**.

- **Prohibited Language:** Words like "The Best," "Number 1," or "Miracle" are almost impossible to use without massive scientific proof.
- **The "Sin" Zones:** Alcohol and Tobacco ads are effectively "invisible" in 2026 due to the **Alcoholic Beverage Control Act**. You cannot show the bottle, the brand, or even someone "enjoying" the drink.

### 3. The "Digital" Chain (New for 2026)

With the rise of **AI-generated content** and **Influencers**, the laws have tightened significantly in the last two years:

- **Influencer Liability:** In 2026, influencers are legally treated as "Advertisers." If they review a product and lie, the **OCPB** can sue them directly, just like a big corporation.
- **AI Disclosure:** There is an increasing push for transparency. If an ad uses an AI-generated model or voice that could mislead a consumer into thinking it's a real person, it can be flagged under the **Computer Crimes Act**.

# The Case of *the IconGroup*



Source:

<https://thestandard.co/aml-o-seized-more-of-the-icon-group-assets/>

# The Case of *the IconGroup*

## The Legal "Chains": Breaking the Professional Boundary

The case represents a historic shift in how Thai law (**OCPB** and the **Computer Crimes Act**) views celebrity liability.

- **From Presenter to Participant:** Usually, a "Presenter" (like Boy Pakorn or Dome Pakorn Lam) is protected if they only "read a script." However, the "Bosses" are being indicted because they took Management Titles.

## Case: Kalamare-Patcharasri Benjamas (2022)

**Kalamare-Patcharasri Benjamas**, a famous Thai TV host, faced legal action in early 2021 for the misleading review of her own dietary supplement brand. She claimed exaggerated benefits, such as "skin tightening" and "reshaping the nose" after consumption.

She pleaded guilty to charges of **False Advertising** and **Advertising without Permission**, which violated both the **Food Act** and the **Computer Crimes Act**. As a result, she decided to resign from her roles as a television host to show social responsibility for her actions.

Source: <https://mgronline.com/entertainment/detail/9640000009365>

# The recent case study of Dr Khongkwan Fujitnirun (Kate)

Source:  
Thai PBS

"Dr. Yong" emphasizes that medical ethics come first after "Dr. Khwan" returned her medical licen...

Thai PBS M 2.5

Thai PBS is a Thai public broadcast service.

www.youtube.com - To exit full screen, press Esc

Thai PBS 3 12:03

The Medical Council

ข่าวเที่ยง NEWS เสาร์-อาทิตย์

0:07

ชมฟรี กว่า 3 หมื่นไร่อีกครั้ง หลังมีการร้องเรียนอ้างชื่อ สส.และผู้มีอิทธิพล เข้าขุดแนวจัดสรรพื้นที่เก็บผลผลิต

More videos YouTube

# The Case Background

On **February 27, 2026**, she made headlines by physically returning her medical license to the Medical Council. Her reason was a direct protest against what she calls the "distorted system" of advertising rules for doctors.

In February 2026, Dr. Khongkwan (Kate) returned her medical license to the Medical Council. This "Field Shift" allowed her to bypass restrictive medical advertising ethics, transitioning from a regulated doctor to a full-time influencer. Now, her "Doing" is governed by OCPB (สคบ.) and general consumer laws instead of medical professional acts.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKb39NdBaOY>

Source: Bangkok Post (28 Feb 2026)


























# The case of Dr Kate













Sources:  
The BKK  
Post and  
Thai PBS



# 'Laws and Regulations Governing the Publications of Ads in the Kingdom of Thailand'

Level	Law	Primary Focus
1. SUPREME	 <p><b>THE CONSTITUTION</b></p>	<p>The State's duty to protect and inform</p>   
2. GENERAL	 <p><b>CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT</b></p>	<p>Preventing false, exaggerated, or unfair ads</p>    
3. DIGITAL	 <p><b>COMPUTER CRIMES ACT</b></p>	<p>Regulating "Spam" and false online data</p>   
4. SPECIFIC	   <p><b>ALCOHOL/TOBACCO/MEDICINE ACTS</b></p>	<p>Near-total bans or strict professional limits</p>   
5. MARKETING	   <p><b>DIRECT SALE &amp; MARKETING ACT</b></p>	<p>Regulating e-commerce and consumer refunds</p>   

# Summary of Laws and Regulations Governing the Publications of Ads in the Kingdom of Thailand

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# Chains and Creativity

## 1. The "Chains" (The Legal Framework)

In Thailand, the "chains" are the strict regulations that limit what an advertiser can do. These are not meant to kill creativity, but to protect the public.

- **The Consumer Protection Act:** Chains that prevent lying or exaggerating.
- **Specialized Acts (Alcohol/Tobacco):** Heavy chains that almost entirely ban the showing of products.
- **Medical Profession Act:** Chains that prevent doctors from "boasting" or using misleading "Before & After" photos.

# Chains and Creativity

## 2. The "Creativity" (The Professional Response)

When the "chains" get tighter, professional agencies (the "Pros") have to become **more creative** to reach the audience. Instead of showing the product, they show the **emotion** or the **consequences**.

- **Metaphors and Storytelling:** Since they can't show a person drinking alcohol, they show "friendship" or "social atmospheres."
- **Humor and Wit:** Thai ads are world-famous for using self-deprecating humor to bypass the "boring" nature of health warnings.

# The High-Context Society (Implicit Codes)

## The Framework: High-Context Culture

- **Edward T. Hall (1976):** Hall is the researcher who officially categorized Thailand as a "**High-Context Society.**"

**The Research Result:** His work proves that in cultures like Thailand, the "Meaning" is not in the words, but in the **Context** (relationships, status, and non-verbal cues). This provides the academic basis for your point on **Implicatures**—where the audience "knows" the message without the advertiser saying it explicitly.

# The High-Context Society (Implicit Codes)

## 1. High-Context Communication (The Thai "Field")

Thailand is a high-context culture, meaning that most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person. Very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message.

- **The Contrast:** In a Low-Context culture (like the US or Germany), ads are direct: *"Buy this soap because it kills 99% of bacteria."*
- **The Thai Way:** Thai ads often focus on **Relationships, Emotions, and Social Hierarchy**. The product is often secondary to the "feeling" or the "story."

# Implied Knowing (Conversational Implicature)

What a speaker implies without stating it directly.

- **The Legal "Chain":** Because the **Alcoholic Beverage Control Act** bans showing the bottle or the brand name, agencies use **implicatures**.
- **The "Doing":** An ad might show a group of friends laughing, a specific color of lighting (e.g., green for Heineken or amber for Leo), and a "Cheers" gesture.
- **The Implicature:** Even though no beer is shown, the audience **knows** exactly what is being advertised. The "knowing" is triggered by the context, not the text.

# The S-N-S Concept - A Thai Loaded Words
























**Sanook สนุก**

**Namjai น้ำใจ**

**Sabai สบาย**



# THAI CULTURAL VALUES IN ADVERTISING & COMMUNICATION

Value	Academic Concept	Advertising "Doing"
<b>1. SANOOK</b> สนุก 	<b>Hedonic Consumption</b>	    PLAYFUL      BRAND AFFINITY
<b>2. NAMJAI</b> น้ำใจ 	<b>Collectivist Altruism</b>	    HELPING OTHERS      SAD-VERTISEMENT      COMMUNITY BOND
<b>3. SABAI</b> สบาย 	<b>Emotional Equilibrium</b>	    REDUCING STRESS      CHILL      PRODUCT SOLUTION      PEACE OF MIND
<b>4.</b>  	<b>Emotional Equilibrium</b>	Meanrizing is link above social Lubricants urses Social Lubricants.    PRODUCT SOLUTION      PEACE OF MIND
<b>4. KEY FINDING</b>	<b>HIGH-CONTEXT CULTURE</b>	Meaning is found in non-verbal cues and social relationships, not explicit words.    SHARED GAZE      WAI      UNSPOKEN

# **Public Service Advertisements (PSAs) in Thailand**

# Definition

Messages designed to raise awareness and change public attitudes or behavior regarding a specific social issue

Unlike commercial advertisements, their primary goal is **social impact** rather than financial profit.

# Key Characteristics

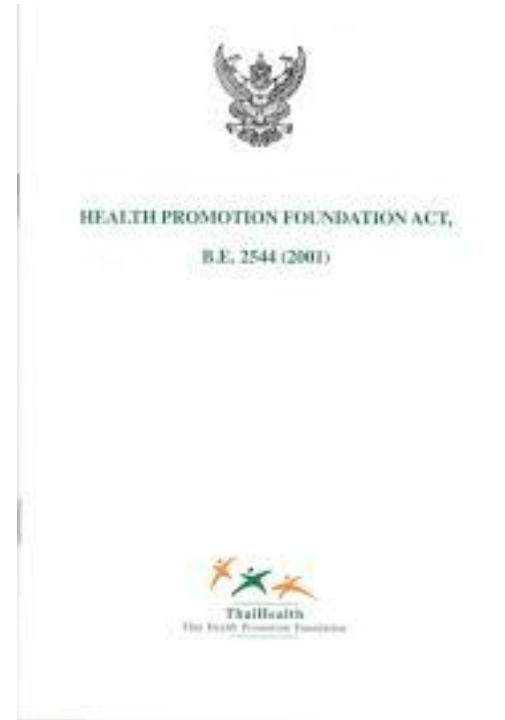
- **Non-Commercial:** They do not sell a product or service; they promote a cause (e.g., health, safety, or conservation).
- **Public Interest:** Topics usually include health (smoking cessation, vaccination), safety (seatbelt use, wildfire prevention), or social issues (literacy, environmental protection).
- **Sponsorship:** They are often produced by non-profit organizations, government agencies, or civic groups.
- **Donated Airtime:** Traditionally, media outlets (TV, radio, print) provide the space or time for PSAs free of charge as a part of their public service commitment.

## Case Study: Ads from The Thai Health Promotion Foundation



# About the Act

The Thai Health Promotion Foundation Act B.E. 2544 (2001) is a landmark piece of legislation in Thailand that established the Thai Health Promotion Foundation,



## The 2017 Constitution of Thailand (article 47)

The charter provides the **legal mandate** for its existence and its "sin tax" funding model through the following articles:

### **Article 47:**

"A person shall have the right to receive **public health services** provided by the State. A person from a poor background shall have the right to receive public health services provided by the State free of charge..."

# The 2017 Constitution of Thailand (article 55)

## 2. The Duty of the State

### Article 55:

"The State shall ensure that the people receive efficient public health services universally, and shall provide the public with knowledge on health promotion and disease prevention..."

## Legal Status

This Act grants them the legal authority to manage their own funds (the 2% "sin tax" from alcohol and tobacco) and to engage in "social marketing."

- **Legality:** The law specifically empowers them to promote health through "communications, campaigns, and social mobilization." Hiring experts (like Ogilvy) to do this is their primary legal mandate.

# Where the Money Comes From

ඒඒඒ. doesn't rely on the general government budget. Instead, they receive a **2% surcharge tax** collected directly from tobacco and alcohol producers and importers.

- This gives ඒඒඒ. a steady, independent income (roughly **฿4 billion per year**) specifically to promote health.

# **Section 11 of the Health Promotion Foundation Act, B.E. 2544 (2001)**

## **Section 11: The Funding Mechanism**

This section defines the "capital and assets" of the Foundation. The critical part is **Section 11 (1)**, which states:

**"The surcharge on top of the excise tax on tobacco and liquor under the Law on Tobacco and the Law on Liquor... at the rate of two percent of the tax collected."**

# The Legal Conflicts / Challenges

Interestingly, there have been several legal challenges to **Section 11** over the years. Tobacco and alcohol companies argued that this was "double taxation" or unconstitutional. However, the **Council of State** and the **Constitutional Court** have consistently upheld it because:

- It serves the **State's Duty** (Articles 47 and 55 of the 2017 Constitution).
- It addresses a **Negative Externality** (the high cost of treating smokers in public hospitals).

How they do the ads?

## **Outsourcing to Experts**

They collaborate with pros like Ogilvy or CJ  
WORX

# Poor / Depressed / Drinking



# Stopping drinking - Work - Exercise - Contribute to Society



# Issues

Utopian perspective (Puritanism?)

AI-generated media/ads

Placement Ads (Grey Areas)

# Predictive Persuasion

When we combine **AI-generated content** with **intrusive algorithms**, we move from "Active Persuasion" to **"Predictive Persuasion."**

## Placement Ads (The Grey Areas)

Placement ads—product placement in movies, influencer "reviews," or celebrity are the ultimate "Grey Areas."

## **To Wrap UP**

- 1. The Historical Development of Thai Advertising**  
**From analog to digital**  
**From fewer rules to a lot of rules and laws**
- 2. Public Service Advertisements (PSAs) in Thailand**  
**Case Study: The Thai Health Promotion Foundation**

**Qs and As**