

NEWS RELEASE

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Commercial Alert Queries Ad Agencies About "Ad Creep"

Commercial Alert sent letters today to the top 10 advertising agencies in the United States to inquire where -- if anywhere -- they would decline to place ads. Following is the letter to Keith Reinhard, Chief Executive Officer of DDB Needham Worldwide.

Dear Mr. Reinhard:

Americans feel assaulted by ads. There are ads in schools, airport lounges, doctors offices, movie theaters, hospitals, gas stations, elevators, convenience stores, on the Internet, on fruit, on ATM's, on garbage cans and countless other places. There are ads on beach sand and restroom walls.

"I don't know if anything is sacred anymore," Mike Swanson, who directs ad placement for the ad agency Carmichael Lynch, told the *Associated Press*.

This assault intensifies virtually every day. The advertising industry will spend an estimated \$233 billion in the United States this year producing and delivering ads to adults and children. With ad budgets skyrocketing, advertising techniques inevitably become more invasive and coercive. Advertisers are engaged in a relentless battle to claim every waking moment, and what one executive called, with chilling candor, "mind share."

We want to know if you agree that nothing is sacred anymore. The advertising industry used to recognize boundaries beyond which it would not go. It did not try to lay claim to every waking moment and every inch of space. Are those days long gone? Do you recognize any place to be off-limits to advertising? In your view, where should your industry draw the line? What should be off-limits to ads? For example:

- \$ Places of worship, such as churches, synagogues and mosques
- \$ The flag of the United States of America
- \$ Schools
- \$ Hospitals
- \$ Body parts, including the body parts of infants and children
- \$ National parks, such as the Grand Canyon or Yosemite
- \$ National monuments, such as the Lincoln Memorial, or the Arlington National Cemetery
- \$ Religious ceremonies, such as weddings and funerals
- \$ Outer space

Thank you in advance for your response.

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Commercial Alert opposes the excesses of commercialism, advertising and marketing. Commercial Alert's website is at <<http://www.essential.org/alert/>>.