

Smoking and the media

In the past, cigarettes were advertised widely on TV, radio, billboards, cinema advertisements, in magazines and at sporting events.

What the law says

All of these types of tobacco advertising are now banned in Australia (with the exception of a few international sporting events hosted in Australia). In some parts of the world, particularly in developing countries, this kind of cigarette advertising still occurs.

Despite Australia's tough laws on tobacco advertising, it is still easy to find examples of cigarettes and smoking being promoted in movies, TV programs and magazines. Often smoking is associated with images of success, pleasure, relaxation and freedom. Promoting tobacco in this way communicates to many people that smoking is an extremely desirable thing to do.

Smoking in movies

Product placement, particularly in movies, is one way tobacco companies 'buy' time and space on TV, radio and in magazines, where they would not normally be allowed to advertise. Sometimes actors and producers get paid or receive gifts from tobacco companies to promote or use their brand of cigarettes in this manner.

Since 1998, smoking in movies has increased by approximately 50%! A study of the highest grossing films since 1988 found that characters in 85% of these movies smoked. In the 1990s, actors smoked cigarettes every one to three minutes in a film, compared to the 1970s and 1980s when actors smoked every ten to fifteen minutes!

Some tobacco companies use product placement to dodge advertising bans by deliberately choosing magazines and movies that appeal to young people to promote cigarettes. Strangely, ashtrays are rarely seen in movies!

Some examples of cigarette product placement

Superman II

Philip Morris paid \$42,000 (US) to have Lois Lane smoke Marlboro cigarettes in Superman II. Also in this movie, a super battle takes place amongst Marlboro billboards and trucks.

Licence to Kill

Philip Morris admitted paying \$350,000 (US) for the promotion of one of their cigarette brands in this James Bond movie.

Other movies where characters smoke include:

- Mona Lisa Smile
- UpTown Girls
- Charlie's Angels
- Spiderman
- Titanic
- Scary Movie 3.

In fashion, art or sport magazines we often see photographs of famous people smoking or models using cigarettes as props to help them look sexy and sophisticated. This is just another way some tobacco companies market their product to make the public see smoking as an attractive thing to do.

If you see someone smoking in the movies or on TV, just remember, there is every chance they've been paid to do it.

