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Culture Pop

Sex

Unpacking the double standards when it comes to censorship

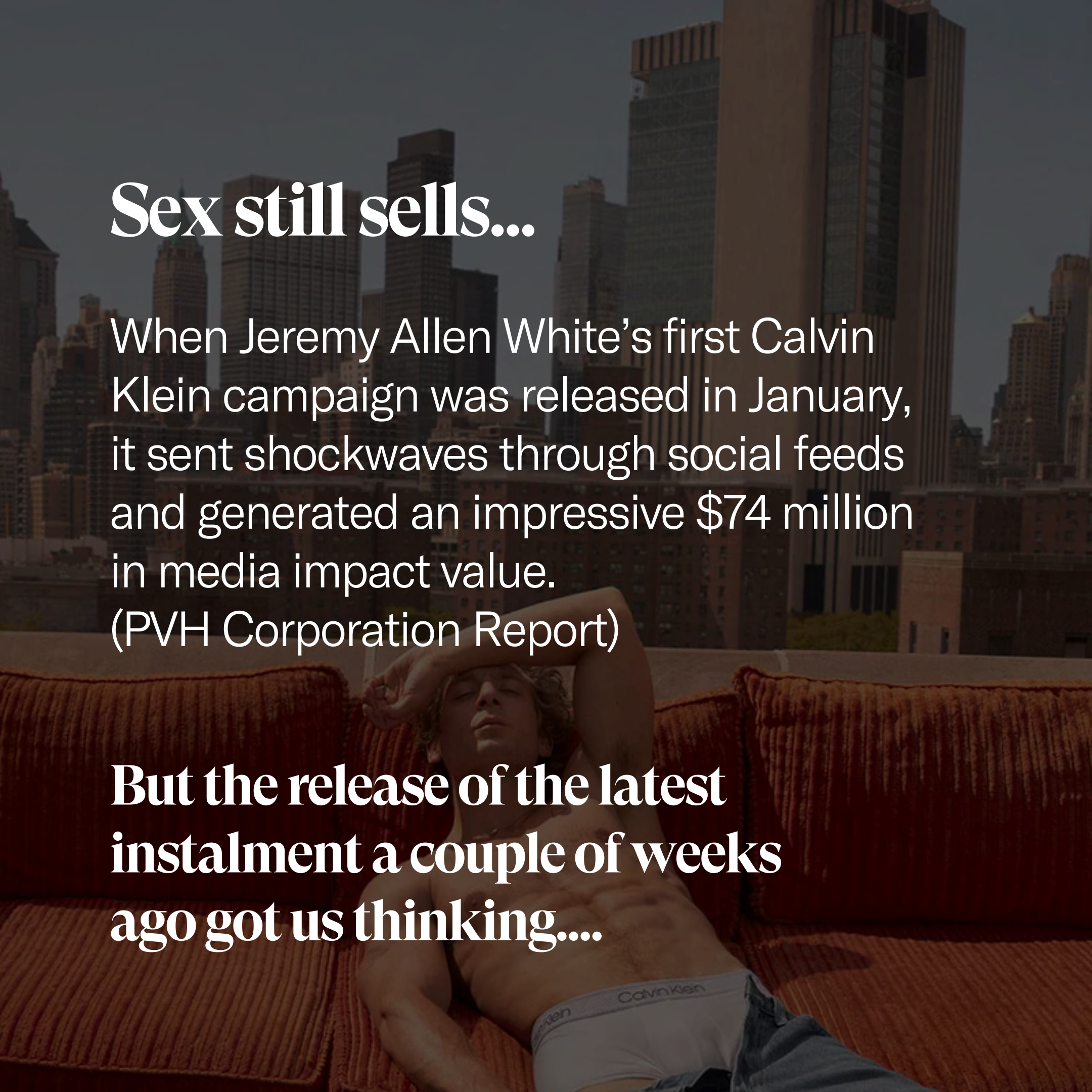


Sex still sells...

When Jeremy Allen White's first Calvin Klein campaign was released in January, it sent shockwaves through social feeds and generated an impressive \$74 million in media impact value.

(PVH Corporation Report)

But the release of the latest instalment a couple of weeks ago got us thinking....



Why is this ok?



But this isn't?



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Ads using women's bodies to promote products for women still face unfair censorship

Molly Baz's Lactation Cookie Recipe billboard was banned in Times Square back in May after just three days in market. It was seen as violating 'guidelines of acceptable content.'



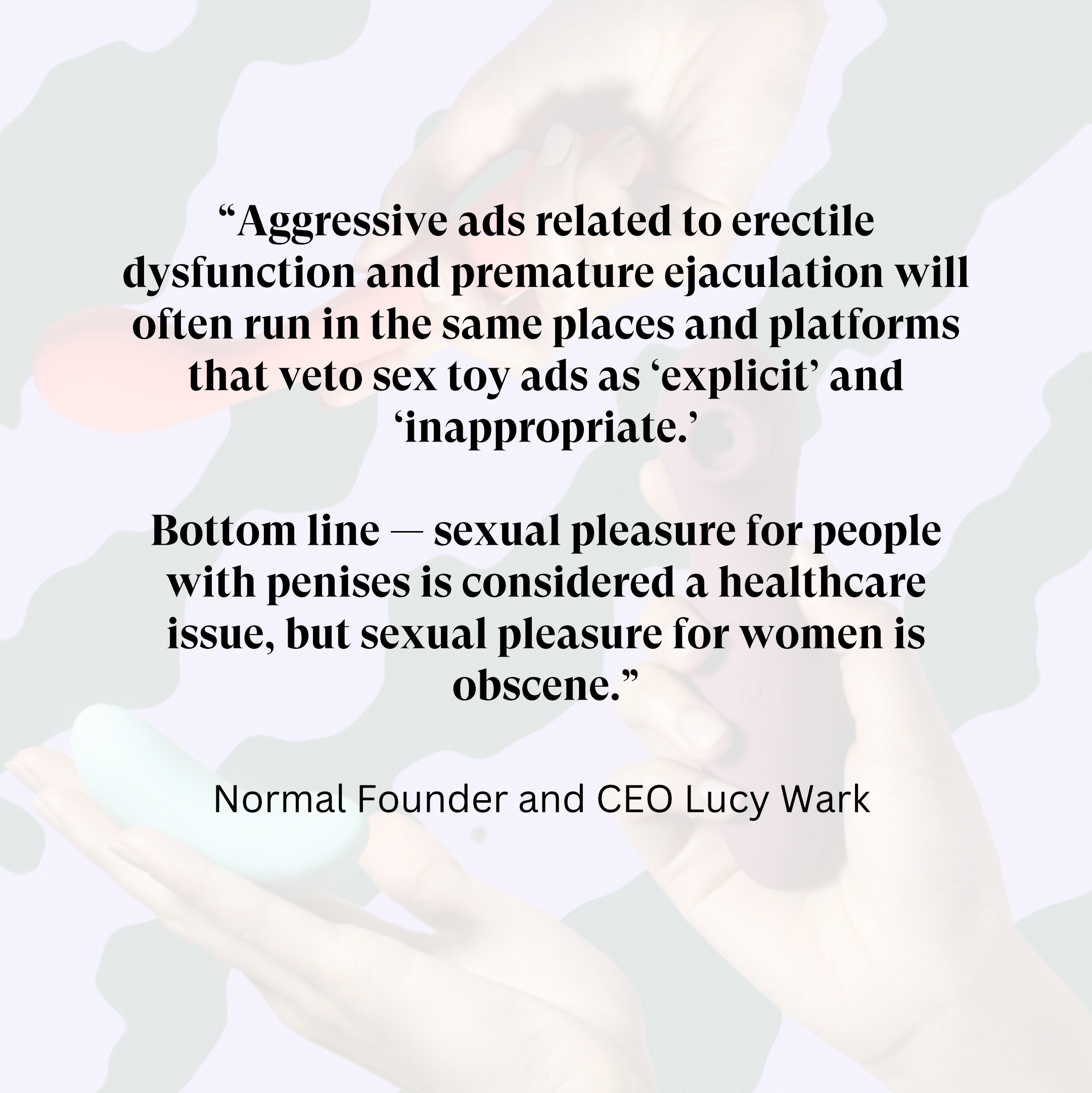
“Extremely disappointed and yet not at all surprised that our cheeky little breastfeeding empowerment campaign was deemed inappropriate and our billboard removed after just 3 days.”

- Molly Baz on Instagram

A double standard in advertising

The sexual health and wellness industry experiences a blatant gendered bias towards which products pass censorship standards.





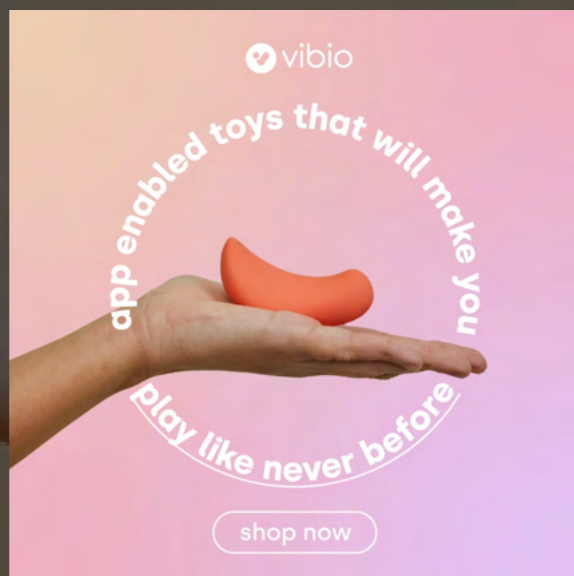
“Aggressive ads related to erectile dysfunction and premature ejaculation will often run in the same places and platforms that veto sex toy ads as ‘explicit’ and ‘inappropriate.’

Bottom line — sexual pleasure for people with penises is considered a healthcare issue, but sexual pleasure for women is obscene.”

Normal Founder and CEO Lucy Wark

These brands are forced to resort to creative ways of getting their message out all while avoiding censorship

Brands like Frida, Vibio, and Normal in the women's health space are pushing back against social media censorship to promote unfiltered women's health content.



How far can we push boundaries?

Female focused advertisers face creative challenges in cutting-through and reaching their audiences across various categories



The Girl vs. Cancer campaign in the UK was banned by the ASA for sexual imagery and coarse language, despite highlighting an incredibly important health issue.

What it means for brands like these

1

It is important to reflect on whether your messaging reinforces or challenges these conventional gender tropes.

2

Open up a wider conversation amongst culture and think beyond just selling a product.

3

Creativity flourishes when you are working under constraints. Understand the platform specific censorship rules and take creative leaps to work around them to land your message.

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