



ADVERTISING
STANDARDS
BUREAU

Level 2, 97 Northbourne Avenue, Turner ACT 2612
Ph (02) 6173 1500 | Fax (02) 6262 9833
www.adstandards.com.au
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1	Case Number	0071/14
2	Advertiser	Drink Wise Australia
3	Product	Community Awareness
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Internet - Social
5	Date of Determination	26/03/2014
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.6 - Health and Safety Within prevailing Community Standards

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Black and white cartoon advertisement which demonstrates the effects alcohol can have on you and recommends that you drink properly and not consume too much.

THE COMPLAINT

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

This advertisement does not explain how much alcohol is too much aside from equating too much with throwing up. I argue that too much is more than 2 -3 drinks & this ad does not make that clear at all. This ad uses language & visual imagery that glamorises alcohol usage: "The realm of drinking excellence." "An experienced drinker always knows their realm of excellence." Advertising chooses each phrase for it's emotive impact: What does 'Experienced drinker' mean to you? That's right, someone who drinks often. Tag that with 'Drinking excellence' & what you have is a legitimisation of regular drinking that gets you to the point of feeling desirable & sexy (read pissed) but not to the level of throwing up (read shit faced). Sorry, that ain't OK. This is nothing more than a plug for the heavy hitters in the booze industries.

- Advertisement encourages drinking through slick advertising
- Message seems to imply that drinking makes you attractive/cool
- Ad states drinking 'too much' is uncool, but what constitutes too much is left vague. The ad implies that having had 'too much' occurs when you vomit/fall over.
- Unknown to the viewer is that DrinkWise is largely funded by alcohol companies themselves.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

We contend that the advertisement does not promote the excessive consumption of alcohol and does not breach any of the sections (including Section 2) of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics (referred to in this letter as the "Code of Ethics") which also covers the AANA Code for Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children and the AANA Code for Food and Beverages Marketing.

The advertisement was developed as part of a broader campaign (the "Campaign") undertaken in light of research into the social trends and drinking habits of young adults aged 18-24 (the "Target Market") which showed that the Target Market continues to regularly consume alcohol despite advice not to drink excessively. As a result, Drinkwise recognized the need for a new approach in the delivery of its message to the Target Market, by using dry humour and social media tools to encourage the Target Market to consider the consequences of drinking excessively.

Accordingly, we disagree that the advertisement potentially breaches section 2.6 of the Code of Ethics. The intention of the advertisement is not to encourage drinking, but rather, to promote Drinkwise's message of moderation and the move towards a healthier and safer drinking culture. This message is also referred to on the official Campaign website which is readily accessible to the Target Market through links across its social media pages and also on Drinkwise's website, which is linked to the Campaign website and provides a variety of information sources on the effects of alcohol and benefits of drinking in moderation.

We note that the complainants have claimed that the advertisement "glamorizes" and "encourages" alcohol usage and is a "legitimization of regular drinking" that will make the viewer attractive. We strongly disagree that this is the message that is conveyed in the advertisement.

While the advertisement is delivered with a humorous tone and using a design and language designed to engage the Target Market, it clearly carries a serious message about keeping in control and drinking safely and responsibly. It encourages the Target Market to stop and "consider how their poor drinking choices can impact how they see themselves in the context of their peer group." (Drinkwise CEO, John Scott). The importance and persuasiveness of a young person's peer group is recognised, including in the Campaign's use of a content channel which most directly engages the target demographic. This is consistent with research showing that the Target Market is inclined to dismiss communication seen as directive in nature, and coming from authority figures such as parents and law enforcement agencies. The form and content of the advertisements are designed to highlight scenarios that will resonate with young people and instigate discussion amongst them and ideally lead them to seek further information. When viewed in the overall context of the Campaign, terms such as "drinking excellence" and "experienced drinker" are not encouraging the viewer to drink to excess. Instead, irony is used to encourage young people to recognize their own limits and avoid the unsavoury effects of overconsumption.

While we take the complaints seriously, we note that since the launch of the Campaign, there

has also been a significant amount of positive feedback that has recognized the serious message that Drinkwise is intending to convey through the advertisement and which has sparked online conversations and raised further awareness about the issues relating to the drinking habits of young adults.

We also note from the complaints that there is concern that Drinkwise has not been transparent about the support provided alcohol industry. We would note however, such information is readily available on the Drinkwise website, including a list of the specific financial contributors that have provided their support in raising awareness in relation to moderation and responsibility when drinking.

Drinkwise is committed to complying with the Code of Ethics and all relevant advertising laws and Codes at all times and on the basis of the above, we maintain that the advertisement does not contravene the Code of Ethics. On this basis, we respectfully submit that the complaints are groundless and should be dismissed.

Research substantiation

As Drinkwise Australia is an evidence-based organisation the campaign messaging needed to be grounded in sound strategic insights based on what young people will respond to. And subsequently the idea and refined communication needed also to reflect the insights gained, targeting the emotional levers that had the best chance of effecting real change. This need ensured an exhaustive testing process from both a Quantitative and Qualitative perspective. The process began with an extensive quantitative segmentation process, completed by QMR (Quantum Market Research). Then GalKal (market research) was engaged to complete a 3 stage qualitative, strategic, concept and final validation testing process to ensure message uptake was as intended.

The following insight was gained into the 'How to Drink Properly' campaign during that testing process.

CONCERN: Advertisement encourages drinking through slick advertising

Through the research we learnt that young adults are becoming desensitised to public health 'shock' campaigns that show the physical repercussions of unhealthy behaviour, driven by the youthful sense of immortality and corresponding belief that "it'll never happen to me". Instead, this demographic is increasingly responding well to campaigns and public health messages they find engaging, clever, relatable and talk to social rather than physical anxieties and repercussions.

For respondents in the target audience, 'Drink Properly' felt akin to the 'pinkie' ad for speeding - tapping into a newer and arguably more emotionally rich space that talks to social risk rather than physical danger and our target's desire to cultivate a more mature and respected 'brand me

Audience belief that this campaign would incite heavy drinking or send the wrong message was low across the sample with the majority clearly comprehending a message around moderation and measured drinking behaviours

· "It doesn't promote drinking, it just doesn't demonise it which is a good thing" – Male, 22

Sydney

· *“It’s a more realistic approach than saying ‘don’t to this, don’t do that’” – Female, 19 Sydney*

· *“That’s gonna make people step back and think ‘oh ok, maybe I should watch out’.” – Female,*

18 Sydney

CONCERN: The ad states drinking ‘too much’ is uncool, but what constitutes too much is left vague. The ad implies that having had ‘too much’ occurs when you vomit/fall over

At the crux of this campaign the majority of respondents saw a message around control, and re-framing controlled behaviour and moderation into something that appears aspirational and desirable. For this audience it begins to shift the way they think about drinking and urges them to re-think their approach. It is no secret that many individuals within this target audience drink to get drunk, this campaign seeks to address this mentality, by highlighting bad behaviour, empowering peers to call out their mates and reinforcing the negative social repercussions of drinking to excess i.e. getting drunk.

The key take out for the majority of the research sample was ‘drink smart not hard’ or ‘do it, just do it properly, within your limits’ which was met with positivity and seen as a realistic, refreshing and mature approach to drinking behaviours.

· *“The message is to drink controlled, don’t drink to get wasted or munted” – 19, Female, Sydney*

· *“The way I saw it was that he [the character] was a safe drinker. He would have a couple but*

know his limits and know when to stop.” - 19, Female Sydney

· *“It’s changing our ideas about going out and drinking” - 22 Female, Melbourne*

· *“Moderation is how much more consciously aware you are. You don’t want to be that messy and that is reflected, and everyone can see that” - Female, 18, Melbourne*

CONCERN: An experienced drinker is someone who drinks often

Core to the success of this campaign (attitudinal and behavioural change) is highlighting the detrimental social and personal effect of being seen as the ‘amateur’ and hero-ing the benefits of being seen as someone who can stay in control and embody mature behaviours (‘an experienced drinker’). The term ‘experienced’ did this job well across the sample in so far as it was seen aspirational, relevant, motivating and implied maturity and progression. Across the sample, the majority of respondents understood that within this context ‘experienced’ alluded to someone who had drinking ‘smarts’ and could ‘keep their cool’ while drinking

· *“To me it reminds me of the wise old uncle that’s done it all before and he’s trying to help you*

along and not get that bad reputation... I’d listen to him.” – 18, Female Regional NSW

· *“An amateur is someone who can’t handle their drinks... the opposite of a classy drinker” - 18,*

Female, Sydney

· *“If you’re a proper drinker you know when to stop. If you’re smart about it you know your limit”*

– 18, Female, Sydney

However, there were a few respondents who felt the term ‘experienced’ did imply someone who had drunk heavily for a long time and while they were a minority, this interpretation was raised within our sample.

· *“I don’t like the use of rookie because to me it feels like if you call someone a rookie at drinking*

they’re going to try to drink more, or more often, to become good at it; so that they are

‘excellent’ drinkers.” - 18, Female Regional, NSW

· *“Like I’d say a ‘good drinker’ is someone who can drink a lot and can handle it, and can get*

pissed and not be that person...” – 18, Female Regional, NSW

Is there anything in the research to suggest that the campaign glamorises drinking?

From the majority of our target audience, drinking in itself as a social act glamorised. Drinking for young adults is a rite of passage that promises the realisation of their ‘uber self’, helps hone their brand me and suggests growing progression and maturity. What this campaign does is glamorise drinking in moderation, it reframes moderating your alcohol intake as something that is desirable and classy, while symbiotically highlighting the social pitfalls and risks of going ‘too far’, crossing your limits and relinquishing control of your body and inhibitions through excess

· *“It highlights how undesirable it is when you don’t know your limits. If you are the one that is*

getting too drunk, you need to stop.” – Female, 19, Melbourne

· *“That’s gonna make people step back and think ‘oh ok, maybe I should watch out’.” – Female,*

18, Syd

Campaign Results (as of 11th March):

The results of the campaign in market have seen not only a huge uptake and extremely positive response. We have also seen an incredibly high level of comprehension.

Campaign Uptake:

Unique Facebook Impressions: 2.32 Million

Total Video Views: 280,000

Total Impressions: 7.77 million

Viral Impressions: 3.95 million

Overall Sentiment: 85% Positive 3% Negative 12% Neutral

Campaign Sharability:

Viral Impressions: 3,701,230

Paid Impressions: 4,069,223

Of the 7.77 million impressions content has appeared in a social Newsfeed, 48% of the time it has come as recommendation from a friend (Viral Impressions).

Campaign Sentiment:

Of Impressions Created on Social Media:

Positive: 3,069,063

Neutral: 495,965

Negative: 67,252

**When someone shares or says something about this campaign, it is classed as positive (praises and understands the message), neutral (no opinion given) or negative (speaks against the campaign).*

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (“Board”) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the “Code”).

The Board noted the complainant’s concerns that the advertisement glorifies drinking alcohol

which is against prevailing community standards.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response.

The Board considered Section 2.6 of the Code. Section 2.6 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety".

The Board noted that alcohol is a product which is legally allowed to be advertised. The Board noted that the advertisement depicts an animated man talking about "how to drink properly". The man is presented in a manner that makes him appear sophisticated and well-spoken and that the initial scenes are reminiscent of a James Bond style approach.

The Board noted that the style of advertisement is vastly different to other advertisements trying to deliver the same important community message regarding excessive drinking and the abuse of alcohol. The Board noted that the advertisement was an internet advertisement designed to reach the target market of young adults aged 18-24 who would relate to the scenarios presented in the advertisement.

The Board noted that the beginning of the advertisement refers to the fact that to drink properly there is a way to do it and a way not to do it. The advertisement then shows various scenes that depict characters drinking as the voiceover highlights when they have had enough to drink and the consequence of them drinking beyond that point.

Some members of the Board were concerned that the advertisement did not clarify what the meaning of "drinking properly" means and that some viewers may find the message being delivered too subtle to understand. The Board agreed however, that the intention of the advertisement was to encourage drinkers to be aware of their own limits and to be familiar with the consequences of drinking excessively.

The Board noted that it had previously dismissed an advertisement for the same advertiser (ref: 0274/08) where the advertisement showed the relationship between adults drinking and the affect this has on children.

In the above matter, the Board noted that "the advertisement was a clever form of social messaging because it struck a nerve in many members of the community - that of the vulnerability of children in response to the unspoken messages they receive from adults about consuming excessive alcohol - because they could see their own actions mirrored in this advertisement".

Consistent with the above decision, the Board considered that the current advertisement depicted scenes that young adults would relate to and that the light-hearted approach did not undermine the importance of the message but rather provided age appropriate messaging to draw the attention of the intended audience.

The Board considered that the advertisement does not depict or encourage the excess consumption of alcohol and does not depict any material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on the safe consumption of alcohol.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code.

The Board then considered section 2.5 of the Code. The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.5 of the Code. Section 2.5 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances and strong or obscene language shall be avoided”.

The Board noted that there is a reference to a drinker being “shit-faced” and considered whether this language was considered inappropriate in the circumstances.

The Board noted that the term “shit faced” is a slang term used to refer to someone that has consumed an excessive amount of alcohol. The Board noted that target audience for the campaign is young adults and considered that in the context of the responsible drinking message and the target audience, this term was not inappropriate in the circumstance and was not considered strong or obscene.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not breach section 2.5 of the code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.