



ADVERTISING
STANDARDS
BUREAU

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Case Report

1	Case Number	0125/14
2	Advertiser	Tyres4U
3	Product	Automotive
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	23/04/2014
6	DETERMINATION	Upheld - Modified or Discontinued

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Race

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Vince Sorrenti explains the benefits of using TyreRight whilst interacting with different members of the community. One interaction is with an Asian man who asks if he is 'wong'. Vince repeats the word 'wong' back to the man.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I personally feel that this message, about getting \$30 back if your tyres aren't fitted in 30min, could have been conveyed without bringing down Asian people. There are many Asian looking people, both from overseas and born in Australia, who can speak perfectly clearly, and making fun of those who are learning to speak a second language certainly doesn't encourage those who are not confident with English to use, practice, and improve their language abilities.

In my opinion this ad vilifies Asian people.

On a final note, it deeply offends me that people are willing to bring down and humiliate those who have come to Australia and are capable of learning a second language when most Australians can barely say hello in a second language. Many people wonder why there is segregation in the community, and "why don't those new people learn our language", well it is adverts like this that certainly don't help.

This ad perpetuates Asian stereotypes. An Asian man is claiming that the claim " is not Wong" , clearly he can't understand , nor speak English properly. The ad is inherently racist

in its portrayal of this man. I could not believe in this day and age I was subjected to such obviously racist stereotyping.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Thank you for your interest in Tyreright and our promotion.

We appreciate your opinion and I am sure you would understand we only have good intention. Overall we've had really positive feedback from the public and I thought it appropriate to acknowledge your contribution in writing. It is never our intention to offend anyone. We would never want to alienate any of our potential customers. The people depicted in the TVC are not actors, they are all 'real' people. We would not want to offend our friend Charlie who is one of the talent. Charlie speaks in 'broken' English, he did not 'put on' an accent and he is not offended. If a child cannot say a 'difficult word' for Yukult and a child cannot say the word Hoechst, both campaigns previously on TV. Is this not the same... to make a 'cute' observation of someone's speech. It endears that person to us. It's a humorous ad that helps break down discrimination... be it a child or an adult. In choosing Vince Sorrenti as the face of Tyreright we thought long and hard about cultural boundaries and diversity. This is one of the key reasons we chose him. Vince is also a wholesome family man with four young children, so he fits right in with the family culture of Tyreright. Vince himself is from Italian heritage, which forms part of the colourful spectrum that makes up our rich and diverse Australian culture. As such we feel Vince is a good representative of Australia's cultural diversity and thus able, in that capacity, to touch all historical nationalities in our community without offending any one of them. He is the first to poke fun at his own upbringing and does so without any intent to offend. We are able to celebrate these differences between us, by noting there are differences between us. We are not all the same... adding humour and noting these differences celebrates that. I apologise if you do not agree with his approach in this case, but assure you that our intentions are to be light hearted, informative and entertaining. I really hope you look beyond your initial impression and give one of our local Tyreright stores (and multi-cultural staff) a chance to show you how good our products and services are sometime in the future.

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 complainants' concerns that the advertisement depicts an Asian man in a manner which is discriminatory and vilifying towards Asians. The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response. The Board considered whether the advertisement complied with Section 2.1 of the Code which requires that 'advertisements shall not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.' The Board noted that this advertisement features Vince Sorrenti telling people they are wrong unless they go straight to TyreRight for their tyres. The Board noted that an Asian man asks if it takes a 'wong time' and Vince replies, 'wong!' The Board noted that it had previously dismissed an advertisement for an Asian food delivery service 0146/13) where: "The Board noted the use of the phrase "you ling, we bling" and considered that this

is a depiction which uses a stereotype of people from an Asian background. The Board recognised the significant issue that migrants can face with language and with being excluded from the community on the basis of language difficulties and accents. The Board also noted that for some cultures there is not a culture of laughing at such issues... The majority of the Board considered that the stereotype used in this advertisement was not a negative depiction of people or a group of people. The Board considered that the stereotype was used in a manner that was clearly intended to be fun and in keeping with the brand and product and was unlikely to be seen broadly in a negative manner.” The Board noted it had also dismissed an advertisement which featured a cartoon sumo wrestler speaking in a Japanese accent (0003/13) where: “The Board noted that the character speaks in a strong Asian accent and considered that this is in keeping with his Japanese appearance and again does not amount to a depiction which would be considered demeaning by most reasonable members of the community...and that the overall tone of the advertisement is light-hearted. The Board considered that the advertisement does not depict an Asian person in a manner which would be considered racist by most reasonable members of the community.” A minority of the Board considered that whilst it could be interpreted as poor taste for Vince to reply to the Asian man with “wong” this response is delivered in manner which is gently mocking rather than negative. The Board noted that the Asian man then responds to Vince with “that’s not wong!” which suggests that he has not taken offense to Vince’s use of the word “wong”. Following considerable discussion however the majority of the Board noted that community standards have evolved over time and considered that most members of the community would find that the ‘joke’ of mocking an accent in this manner has worn thin. The Board acknowledged that it had previously dismissed advertisements where accents are used in a stereotypical manner but considered that in this instance the depiction of Vince Sorrenti repeating a word which has been mispronounced by an Asian man amounts to ridicule. The Board noted that whilst the Asian man is speaking we can also see two people behind him who appear to be Asian and wearing hats typically associated with Asian field workers. The Board noted that the scenes featuring other members of the community questioning Vince about TyreRight depict them with their vehicles, either alone or in a mechanic workshop. The Board considered that by depicting the Asian man in a market garden setting with Asian workers toiling the field behind him is a depiction which marks him out as different from the other people used in the advertisement and considered that this depiction along with the use of the word ‘wong’ amounts to an overall representation of an Asian person which mocks and ridicules him. The Board noted it had previously upheld an advertisement which featured an Indian salesman in case 0267/11 where: “...the Board considered, however, that the depiction of the door to door salesman as an Indian man with a strong accent does perpetuate a stereotype, and is one that would generally be considered to be a negative stereotype of a person from a particular racial background.” The Board considered that in this instance the advertisement does depict material which discriminates or vilifies a section of the community. The Board determined that the advertisement did breach Section 2.1 of the Code. Finding that the advertisement did breach Section 2.1 of the Code the Board upheld the complaints.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION

We accept the Advertising Standards Bureau’s decision, even though there were only a few complaints against this Tyreright TVC, which can be countered by many positive reactions to the ad from members of the public who do not agree that any offense was intended.

That being said, we will withdraw the ad, in its current form from TV, as was planned from the end of April 2014.

