



**ADVERTISING
STANDARDS
BUREAU**

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Case Report

1	Case Number	0155/14
2	Advertiser	Guthy-Renker Australia
3	Product	Toiletries
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	14/05/2014
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general
- 2.5 - Language Inappropriate language

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

60 second ad offering a free Proactiv Deep Cleansing Wash with the purchase of the Proactiv 3 step system for blemish control. The advertisement features young teens using the product.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I have two strong objections regarding the ad. Firstly, the use of the word sexy in relation to how the product will make your skin look. And secondly, how the ad is blatantly aimed at the youth market and how they have sexualised the ad.

I don't believe the advert is truthful or honest by using this word.

I think the company is directly aiming their ad at young people which is inherently wrong and insinuating that in order to be 'sexy' you need to use their product. I think the ad standards agency has a moral responsibility to keep these sexualised ads out of our lounges. As parents we have a big enough struggle maintaining the self worth of our children with characters such as Rihanna and Miley Cyrus in the public domain, without having to deal with ads promoting 'sexy skin' to the younger market.

Many thanks for your time.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We believe the ad complies with the requirements of the AANA Code of Ethics and is appropriate in its approach based upon prevailing community standards. The ad was given a G classification by CAD.

Guthy Renker Australia takes its obligations seriously in terms of complying with all codes and regulations relating to our products and the ads that are shown to the public. The aim of our Proactiv products and our ads is to empower people to look and feel their best.

The depiction of the female and male models and users of Proactiv products, who are featured in the sixty second ad, is in a fun, uplifting and empowering manner. Apart from a single reference to the idea of “ sexy” in the phrase “sexiest, smoothest clear skin ever”, there is no other reference to sexuality. The term sexy is used as a way of indicating attractiveness, in a positive sense.

The use of language in the ad is appropriate in the circumstances, including the use of the term “sexiest” and complies with section 2.5 of the Code of Ethics.

This ad is referencing clear skin on the face and the body and the use of the Proactiv Deep Cleansing Wash on the body. The predominant visual depictions in the ad are of people’s faces, before and after the use of the Proactiv products and their backs and re-telling their positive experiences with the products. Both male and female users are shown.

One small segment in the vision is of a woman running along the beach in a bikini. Another shot shows a woman from the waist up with a bikini top on. These shots do not employ sexual appeal in an exploitative or degrading way. The models are modestly clad and are moving naturally and with a happy attitude. The depictions are appropriate in that the ad was designed to show off clear skin in a setting where we show our body the most – during summer, at the beach or in bare shoulder tops.

Another shot of a couple depicts them in a happy, normal hug that is appropriate for viewing by all ages. The single shot of a person using the deep cleansing wash in the shower on their body is modest and only shows shoulders, not the rest of the body and not the face of the model.

The vision complies with the provisions of section 2.4 of the Code in that any hint of sexuality or bare skin that is depicted, is done with sensitivity to the relevant audience and in a tasteful and positive manner.

The ad is not directly aimed at the youth market, but at all age groups who experience breakouts. Two of the persons whose age is identified in graphics in the ad are in their twenties, not their teens. The models and Proactiv users shown in the ad are a mixture of people in their teens and twenties. There are no children depicted in the ad.

The Code for advertising or marketing communications to children does not apply.

Based upon a viewing of the ad and based upon the above explanation, we hope the Board dismisses the complaint.

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 refers to making skin look sexy which is inappropriate and sexualised.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.4 of the Code.

Section 2.4 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience”.

The Board noted that the advertisement features the promotion of a free Proactiv Deep Cleansing Wash with the purchase of the Proactiv 3 step system for blemish control. The advertisement features teenagers using the treatment and information about how to order and pay for the product.

The Board noted the complainant’s concern that the reference to sexy skin is inappropriate for a target market of young teens.

The Board noted the use of the words “sexiest, smoothest clear skin ever” and considered that the reference to sexy skin is intended to suggest ‘attractive’ to a younger audience. The Board considered that in this context this is not a sexual reference and is not suggestive of sex. The Board also considered that the reference does not suggest that young people cannot be attractive without sexy skin.

The Board noted that the advertisement was given a G rating by CAD and that it was aired in the appropriate times for the rating. The Board considered that the intended audience for this product would be teenagers and that with this in mind, the Board considered that the advertisement did treat the issue of sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

The Board then 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 the use of the term sexy is not of itself a word that is considered strong or obscene or inappropriate in the circumstance and 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 complaints.