



Case Report

1	Case Number	0195/10
2	Advertiser	Coca-Cola South Pacific Pty Ltd
3	Product	Food and Beverages
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	27/05/2010
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

Product Placement AFGC - Product Placement
Food and Beverage Code (Children) misleading/deceptive

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This TV advertisement depicts a number of male and female puppets in an office environment. One of the female puppets is asked by the female boss to do extra work at the end of the working day. Her female co-workers comment that the boss needs to "Lighten up" & "it's time for a diet coke". Everyone stops work and dances to upbeat music "she's a maniac" for a "Lighten up" moment. End caption: "Diet Coke If you love it light".

THE COMPLAINT

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

These puppet girls look very similar to a "Bratz" doll sold/marketed to young 7-11 yr old girls I find this add to be directly advertising diet coke to young children. No soft drink should be aimed at this age group with all the issues in today's society in Australia about healthy living and body image issues.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We understand from your letter that the complainant believes the advertisement contravenes section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics.

I would like to address each of the relevant section 2.4 - advertising and marketing and 2.8 The Marketing and Communications Code.

This advertisement was created specifically to appeal to women 30-49 years old who are the core drinkers of diet Coke. This was in no way created to engender interest in diet Coke for Children under 12 years old.

The characters depicted are in no way meant to be a representation of Bratz Dolls. The characters are puppets, not dolls. In this way they are not similar to Bratz Dolls. They are clearly all adult characters (not teenagers or young people) and are depicted in an adult office environment.

The media this advertisement has been placed in includes "Talkin' Bout Your Generation," "My Kitchen Rules" and "The Ellen Degeneres Show." These programs all clearly target women 30-49 and are not targeted to children. As part of our Marketing to Children policy we do not place any advertising in children's programming.

Both male and female puppets are depicted and the light-hearted, puppet characters simply replace the usual adult characters that have for many years appeared in diet Coke advertising. An example of this would be the diet Coke Break (1990's) where women took a diet Coke Break from their daily office environment. As such, the puppets are an extension of similar creative ideas, with the puppets used to create interest with our older, female target market.

Also it may be relevant to understand that the use of puppets as a creative device in advertising which targets and entertains adults is not unique with brands such as Dolmio already having utilised this approach.

The Coca-Cola Company adheres to both the AANA Marketing to Children Policy as well as its own Marketing to Children Policy. This policy is attached. As such, we strictly adhere to not marketing any of our brands, including diet Coke to children under the age of 12.

We thank you for contacting us regarding this advertisement however in this instance we disagree that we have contravened Section 2 of the code as this is an advertisement clearly targeted at women 30-49.

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 is advertising an unhealthy product to children.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser response that the advertisement was created with women 30-49, the core drinkers of Diet Coke in mind and that they do not place advertisements in any children's programming. The Board noted that the advertisement featuring puppets was set in an adult office environment and that the advertisement was placed in programs clearly targeted at adults and was not in children's programs or targeted at children.

The Board considered that the 'dolls' depicted in the advertisement do look similar in style to 'Bratz' dolls which are toys for children, however the setting of the advertisement and its theme were unlikely to be attractive to children. The Board also considered that the advertised product (Coca Cola) is not targeted towards children and is not of principal appeal to children. The Board considered that the advertisement is not advertising to children and that the provisions of the AANA Code for Advertising and Marketing to Children do not apply, nor does Part 3 of the AANA Food and Beverages Advertising and Marketing Communications Code.

The Board agreed that the advertisement did not breach any provisions of the Code.

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