



Case Report

1	Case Number	0220/11
2	Advertiser	Pacific Brands Holdings Pty Ltd
3	Product	Clothing
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	13/07/2011
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.3 - Sex/sexuality/nudity Treat with sensitivity to relevant audience
- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Sex

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

A young woman waking in the morning and going about her day. The advertisement is shot from her point of view and of those passing her by, many of whom make it obvious that they are admiring her stocking clad legs.

THE COMPLAINT

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

There are no shots of the girl's face or upper body in the advertisement. Almost all of the shots are of the girl's upper legs and her very short skirt.

I found the shot of the girl's upper legs from the taxi's rear view mirror particularly offence as it shows her crossing her legs and you can almost see her crutch. I believe that the entire advertisement portrays looking up girls skirts as acceptable. The shot from the taxi's rear view mirror is almost encouraging up skirting.

The shots of her upper legs and crutch as she is getting into the taxi and being stared at by the guy closing the door is disgusting. All of the shots of the men's faces show them looking at her like she is a piece of meat.

The shots of the other two girls in the advertisement show them with expressions of jealousy or embarrassment in comparison to the main girl. The shots of the other girls in comparison encourages women to feel inferior if they are not also wearing a ridiculously short skirt and stockings.

I find it offensive that women can be portrayed in such a sexualised and demeaning way. I would like to see this advertisement removed from television.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Whilst we acknowledge that the complainant has been offended by the advertisement, we do believe that this creative is entirely appropriate within the context of being an advertisement for hosiery and given the target market and media placement. The feedback we have received from our consumers, our retail partners and the general public has been consistently positive. We reject the claim that this advertisement portrays women in a sexualised or demeaning way and so assert that this advertisement does not contravene Sections 2.1 or 2.3 of the Code of Advertising Ethics, relating to discrimination and vilification and the treatment of sex, sexuality and nudity in advertising.

We feel it is reasonable to depict our product being modelled in our advertising and feel that this has been done in an appropriate fashion.

The Creative concept

Razzamatazz is an iconic Australian brand with strong brand recognition, in part drawn from a long-standing heritage of distinctive advertising that is firmly planted in the hearts and minds of the Australian public. The Razzamatazz advertisements of the '70s and '80s established a unique creative idea, featuring the personification of the brand, the 'Razzamatazz girl' character walking down the street, drawing admiration from onlookers in an innocent and charming way. The tone was consistently fresh, fun, light-hearted, innocent and very Australian in its humour.

This metaphor to demonstrate Razzamatazz hosiery giving women great looking legs is still at the heart of the brand today. The new television commercial brings this much loved scenario to life in a fresh, contemporary way, appealing to the young women of today. We see the Razzamatazz girl from the moment she wakes up, as she gets ready and makes her way to meet a girlfriend at a cafe, pausing throughout the advertisement to show how great her legs look thanks to the Razzamatazz stockings and the response of onlookers, seemingly mesmerised, true to the traditional Razzamatazz scenario. Whilst passersby are captivated by the enigmatic Razzamatazz girl, we also see other metaphors alluding to the old Razzamatazz advertisements such as the waiter spilling a bowl of soup. The tone is fresh, fun and tongue in cheek, capturing the humour and sense of hyperbole that our consumers have come to expect from the brand. The idea is to present the brand, and indeed sheer stockings as suitable for everyday and wearable by any woman.

Whilst strong reference is made to the old Razzamatazz metaphor, much care was taken to develop a contemporary translation that would appeal to the sensibilities of today's generation of young women. Elements such as having much of the advertisement filmed as if from her point of view shifts the focus back to the main character and her life through her eyes, as a busy, independent young woman, rather than as an object observed from afar. Also opening on her room, and following her as she goes about her day, shows the viewer more of who this character is than older executions.

Identity of the main character

The fact that the main character's face is not revealed is designed to pique the viewer's curiosity and generate the idea that she could actually be any girl or indeed could be the viewer herself, an everyday girl rather than an extraordinary model as viewers may be accustomed to seeing in advertising. We view this as a unique and refreshing approach to engage the viewer. This treatment does not infer that she is objectified, as the complainant implies.

Call to action

In speaking with our target market, we have found that many women are self-conscious about showing their legs, preferring to cover up in pants, jeans or opaque tights. The idea behind the campaign and its tagline "Take your Legs Out" is a call to action to encourage women to feel good about wearing skirts and dresses and Razzamatazz product enables them to have great looking legs. The advertisement is not meant to exclude or intimidate as the complainant claims. The choice of 'girl next door' style of talent and keeping the main character's identity a mystery was in fact designed to make the concept more inclusive.

Representation of the characters

The scenario of having passersby seemingly mesmerised by her Razzamatazz-clad legs continues the brand's long-standing and much loved scenario of the "Razzamatazz effect". The males are portrayed either as having been mesmerised or in admiration of her, true to the traditional Razzamatazz idea. Care was taken to ensure the expression of the actors remained on brief and certainly not as the complainant mentions of objectifying her as a "piece of meat".

Similarly, we do not feel that this creative is sexually suggestive or demeaning as the complainant claims. The males in the advertisement were specifically included to show the admiration and captivation towards the enigmatic Razzamatazz girl and to demonstrate the 'Razzamatazz effect', as developed in the brand's advertising history. At all times the tone is either of innocent admiration or comic hyperbolic distraction, as demonstrated by the girl nudging her gobsmacked partner or the waiter spilling the soup. Again, this tone reflects the brand's light-hearted, fresh and very Australian sensibility that our target market would understand.

The main character does not set out to invoke sexual responses and the responses or passersby are innocent in tone. At no time are the poses sexually provocative, the style is candid and every day. Several young women who form part of our target demographic that we showed the creative to during development found it fresh, fun and appealing and found the lack of a typical love story refreshing and modern by showing the main character as independent and un-phased by the young men. They did not see her as objectified or demeaned by the men or the scenario.

Furthermore, the advertisement is for hosiery and we feel it is entirely appropriate to display the product advertised. It is difficult to show the product due to its virtually transparent appearance, so shots of the product on the model's legs were designed to show the polished finish and tinted colour that hosiery gives to the model's skin. The actors' poses are not sexually suggestive, merely candid glimpses of a young woman as she goes about her busy day. In addition, we strongly refute the claims made by the complainant that there are shots "of her crutch"(sic).

Clothing

We also assert that the choice of clothing for the main character is entirely appropriate, reflecting a style typical of our 18-28 year old target consumer. The main character's outfit is neither figure hugging, nor low cut at the neckline or midriff, reflecting the intention that the wardrobe choice was designed to allow the hosiery product to be shown on her legs, as fitting for a hosiery brand, and in fact to avoid being interpreted as lewd or sexually provocative as the complainant infers.

The brief for styling the product was focussed on feminine yet contemporary and aspirational yet attainable, to reflect the campaign's objective of encouraging women to be comfortable to wear skirts and dresses instead of feeling the need to cover up in trousers or jeans.

As such we don't feel that the wardrobe choice portrays the woman in a manner that is sexually explicit so as to be seen as inappropriate to our target audience.

Similarly, we disagree with the complainant's claim that "almost all of the shots are of the girl's upper legs". In our view, we are showing the product being advertised, as modelled on legs. The creative does not focus more on upper legs than her legs overall.

To address the complainant's concern regarding the scene when the main character is travelling by taxi, the frames shot in the rear view mirror of the taxi provide an opportunity for a cinemagraphically creative way of including another shot of the product. It is not intended to be at all sinister and we refute the complainant's claim that this encourages or even alludes to 'upskirting'. The fact that the viewer doesn't see her face is in keeping with the advertisement's idea of the girl's identity being a mystery, that she could be any everyday girl.

In conclusion, we acknowledge the complainant's feedback; however we can only reject her claims that this advertisement portrays women in a sexualised, demeaning or discriminatory way. We do believe that this advertisement is appropriate for and reflective of the sensibilities of our target market, particularly with the context of being an advertisement for hosiery and the considered selection of media scheduling.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standard Board ('the Board') considered whether the advertisement complied with the AANA Code of Ethics ('the Code').

The Board noted the complainant's concerns that this advertisement objectifies women and endorses looking up women's skirts.

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

The Board noted the advertisement has been rated 'W' by CAD.

The Board first 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, sex, age, sexual preference, religion, disability or political belief.'

The Board noted that the advertisement shows a young woman going about her daily activities and that the focus is on her legs wearing the advertised stockings.

The Board noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement objectifies women because her head is not shown. The Board considered that it is reasonable for the advertisement to focus on the woman's legs given the product advertised is stockings. The Board considered that the woman is not objectified in the advertisement.

The Board determined that, in this instance, the advertisement did not depict any material that discriminated against or vilified any person or section of society. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board then considered whether the advertisement complied with Section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 states: '...shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and, where appropriate, the relevant programme time zone'.

The Board noted that in one scene the woman's legs can be seen reflected in the taxi driver's mirror. The Board noted the complainant's concern that this scene endorses looking up a woman's skirt. The Board considered that it is not clear who is looking in the mirror but it appears to be from the point of view of the woman herself rather than the taxi driver. The Board noted that the focus of this particular shot is once more on the woman's legs wearing the product rather than a gratuitous upskirt shot. The Board considered that the advertisement was not encouraging or endorsing viewers to look up the skirts of women.

The Board determined that the advertisement did treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and that it did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

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