



Case Report

| | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Case Number | 0226/11 |
| 2 | Advertiser | The Tool Shop |
| 3 | Product | Hardware/Machinery |
| 4 | Type of Advertisement / media | Billboard |
| 5 | Date of Determination | 13/07/2011 |
| 6 | DETERMINATION | Upheld - Modified or Discontinued |

ISSUES RAISED

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

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Billboard features an image of three tradeswomen; a mechanic, a builder and a landscaper standing proudly in uniform with tools and equipment in hand. The ad title reads "Imagine All Three At Once? We Can..." followed by the company logo "The Tool Shop" and tag line "The Tradey's Candy Shop".

THE COMPLAINT

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

This ad offended me by suggesting that women are sexual objects. The line 'How about all three?' suggests the idea that a man can use these women (and therefore all women in general) as objects for his own gratification....just like picking tools off a shelf and using them.

There is however an obvious difference between a piece of hardware and a person. This ad is disgusting and sends the wrong message to men and women particularly those who are younger. I would appreciate it if this ad was removed from public view especially since it's on a main road where young children can easily see it at any time of day.

The ad is for a threesome - not tools

The 'candy' is referring to women... even if this was NOT visible to children 24/7 it is completely irrelevant to suggest sex with a threesome in the same conversation as buying tools.

NOTE: on a Saturday or Sunday not long after the billboards went up I drove past the shop in question and they had employed (I assume) a number of girls wearing very short shorts and tight white t-shirts (with bare midriffs) to drape themselves over a number of toolboxes and wave to the passing traffic...

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/sunday-mail/mp-hammers-tradies-over-sexism-at-rna-expo/story-e6frep2f-1226073561048> many other men and women are unhappy with the way sex is being used to 'sell' tools... for many reasons!!

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

In response to the complaint about our billboard we believe that we have treated the issue of sex with sensitivity according to section 2.3 in the AANA code of ethics. The women are not provocatively dressed but rather dressed in the required safety uniforms for each trade qualification.

With regards to the title and tag line of the ad, our intention was to outline the variety of tools and equipment we stock in our store, suitable to the different trades i.e. mechanical/outdoor/construction etc.

We believe this portrayal has not breached the AANA guidelines. The women are in no way dressed "provocatively" nor is the tag line referring to anything sexual.

We also struggle to comprehend how this billboard in any way, shape or form could "suggest that women are sexual objects".

The second tag line beneath our logo (The Tradey's Candy Shop) was actually developed from feedback from our customers. They are constantly commenting on how they feel like a "kid in a candy shop".

Overall, the ad is purely aimed at portraying the range and variety that we carry in store in a creative way. We also consulted APN, the billboard company on their thoughts on the advertising and they had no hesitation in approving it.

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 complainants' concerns that this advertisement is offensive by suggesting that women are sexual objects and objectifying women.

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

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 features the image of three women holding various tools accompanied by text which reads 'imagine all three at one...we can.'

The Board noted the complainants' concerns that the advertisement objectifies women. The Board considered that the images of the women holding the tools, while clearly there to attract attention to the woman rather than the tools, were not offensive or inappropriate images.

However the Board noted the text alongside the images 'imagine all three at once...we can' and noted the advertiser's response that the tag line 'is not referring to anything sexual.'

The Board considered that the text could be read as a reference to being able to purchase all three tools in one place or to having sex with all three women at once.

The Board considered that the connotation more likely to be taken from the advertisement by a reasonable consumer is that the advertisement is referring to being able to have sex with the three women at once. The Board considered that this suggestion and the overall advertisement clearly presented the women as sexual objects to be purchased or used and did so in a manner that was demeaning to women.

The Board determined that the advertisement discriminated against or vilified women and breached section 2.1 of the Code of Ethics.

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

The Board considered that the depiction of the women was not strongly sexualized or sexually suggestive and that the innuendo in the advertisement would be unlikely to be understood by a young audience. As the sexual innuendo in the advertisement would be likely to be above children's heads and was not accompanied by sexualized images, the Board considered that the advertisement did treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and did not breach section 2.3 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement breached Section 2.1 of the Code, the Board upheld the complaint.

ADVERTISER RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION

The Advertiser responded confirming that the advertisement in question will be modified for any future use. The advertiser also confirmed that they have contacted the outdoor

advertising company with whom they hold their contract and have advised them of the Board's decision and the need for the advertisement to be removed and replaced with a new design. The advertisement should be removed by the beginning of August 2011.