



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Ad Standards Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1. Case Number :	0240-19
2. Advertiser :	Hotels Combined
3. Product :	Other
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	TV - Free to Air
5. Date of Determination	7-Aug-2019
6. DETERMINATION :	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.1 Discrimination or Vilification

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

The Panel noted the television advertisement features a woman walking into a room and seeing a variety of computer screens showing different hotel websites, and asks "have you been up all night?" A man pops up from behind a pot plant and whispers, "I'm looking for hotel deals". He moves from behind the lounge off screen as the woman asks, "why didn't you just go to Hotel's Combined? They compare hundreds of travel sites in seconds." The man is seen hanging from the ceiling and he repeats "Hotels combined".

THE COMPLAINT

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

The current HotelsCombined ad (first run several years ago) is SEXIST it portrays the male partner as a SIMEON that walks like a monkey and hangs from the ceiling like a monkey NO DEPICTION OF A NON-MALE IN SUCH A LIGHT WOULD EVER BE TOLERATED PULL THIS OFFENSIVE SEXIST AD NOW!

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE





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

The advertisement is an exaggeration of the frustration consumers feel when juggling multiple hotel booking websites to find the best deal. It is very clear from the TVC execution that this is the cause of the main character's reaction. There is no suggestion or implication that the main character is inferior from his wife with no self-control nor is he suffering an actual pre-existing mental illness of any kind.

With reference to section 2.1 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics, we believe the TVC is well within acceptable community norms. Our monitoring of reaction to the TVC indicates that viewers understand the intent of the TVC and that, aside from a previous complain that has been dismissed, there has been no notable reaction from the general community or Mental Health authorities that indicates this TVC either discriminates against men - or discriminates against people with mental illnesses. Furthermore, the TVC was assessed by CAD and given a "G" classification. This is the most general classification available - meaning the TVC is judged as acceptable for all audiences. Therefore, we respectfully request that this complaint be dismissed.

THE DETERMINATION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (Panel) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement discriminated against or vilified a person on the basis of gender.

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

The Panel 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 Panel noted the television advertisement features a woman walking into a room and seeing a variety of computer screens showing different hotel websites, and asks "have you been up all night?" A man pops up from behind a pot plant and whispers, "I'm looking for hotel deals". He moves from behind the lounge off screen as the woman asks, "why didn't you just go to Hotel's Combined? They compare hundreds of travel sites in seconds." The man is seen hanging from the ceiling and he repeats "Hotels combined".

The Panel noted the Practice Note to Section 2.1 provides the following definitions:



“Discrimination – unfair or less favourable treatment.

Vilification – humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred, contempt or ridicule.”

The Panel noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement is sexist as it portrays the male partner in a monkey like fashion.

The Panel noted the advertiser’s response that the advertisement does not discriminate against men.

The Panel considered that organisation of holidays and booking accommodation is not a role which is stereotypically associated with either gender. The Panel considered that the depiction of the man struggling to book accommodation was not a suggestion that this was a task which all men would struggle with, nor was it a suggestion that he was struggling with the task because he was male.

The Panel considered that the depiction of the man acting in a manner where he is hiding behind furniture and hanging from the ceiling is an exaggerated and light-hearted portrayal of someone who is acting oddly due to extreme fatigue from endeavouring to work out which hotel to book online after assessing information from many different booking sites and was not a depiction related to gender.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of gender and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code

Finding that the advertisement did not breach any other section of the Code the Panel dismissed the complaint.