



Case Report

1	Case Number	0253/10
2	Advertiser	Johnson & Johnson Pacific Pty Ltd
3	Product	Toiletries
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	22/06/2010
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The 30 second advertisement describes a young empowered businesswoman on her way to a job interview. She hurries down a city street and as she is passing by a large department store she has an idea, checks her watch, heads for the make-up counter where she cheekily samples some lip gloss, then visits the bathroom where she takes out a Carefree Acti-Fresh liner from her bag. The ad then shows a product benefits sequence. She then applies a spray of perfume further building her confidence before moving onto the final scene where the hero walks into a job interview feeling fresh and confident, with a big smile and knowing expression that she has nailed the job interview before saying a word. We then see an affirmation of this confidence as the centre panel member smiles and nods at her colleague.

The 15 second advertisement is a cut down version of the 30 second advertisement.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I find the advertisement objectionable and offensive on the basis that it implies that during a job interview a woman's appearance is a more important factor than her skills and qualifications. I find the ad particularly sexist because due to the nature of the advertised product it is specifically demonstrated that such requirements apply only to women. I felt that had the centre interviewer in the ad been a man then the ad would have been even more overtly sexist but I do not feel that the interviewer's gender negates the implicit sexism.

Emphasising a woman (or man's) looks may be appropriate in some circumstance but I do not think a job interview setting is one of them. I think our society has moved beyond judging a woman's worth by her appearance and would like to see that reflected in advertisements.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The target audience for this creative copy is women who love to achieve and enjoy the feeling of having things under control. They are highly educated, working professionals who care about their appearance and how they project themselves.

The intent of the Carefree Acti-Fresh advertisement as a whole is to show how the 'little things' (lipstick, perfume, panty liner) work together to give you 'big confidence' when you need it most, for example when attending a job interview.*

The underlying theme of the advertisement is 'little things, big confidence'. When you feel confident, you project confidence and people have confidence in you, as portrayed in the advertisement.

It is for these reason we disagree that the advertisement implies that during a job interview a woman's appearance is more important than her skills and qualifications.

We remain satisfied that the advertisement complies in all respects with the provisions of the AANA Code of Ethics (including the Codes incorporated therein) (the "Codes"), and in particular section 2.1 of the Code.

We respectfully ask the Advertising Standards Board to set aside this 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 complainant's concern that the advertisement is offensive and discriminatory towards women and men.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of section 2.1 of the Code.

Section 2.1 of the Code states:

"Advertising or marketing communications shall not portray people or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of ... sex."

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser response, including the promotional slogan: "little things, big confidence", relating to the theme of the advertisement.

The Board noted the advertisement was for a female hygiene product - panty-liners - and considered this is a difficult product to advertise as the advertiser cannot show the use of the product in a realistic way.

The Board noted concern that the advertisement suggests that women's looks are more important than competence. The Board considered the woman was depicted in a positive way to demonstrate 'first impressions count' and considered that most members of the community would clearly understand it is in the best interests of job applicants – male or female – to ensure they look their best and impress the interviewer when attending an interview.

The Board considered that most people would not consider the advertisement to be demeaning of talent and determined that the advertisement did not depict any negative or demeaning images of any particular section of the community on account of ... gender and did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

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