



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1	Case Number	0297/18
2	Advertiser	Fujitsu General
3	Product	House Goods Services
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	11/07/2018
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Race

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement begins with a scene of a temple on a high snow-covered mountain. The scene cuts to Mark Taylor, Fujitsu's brand ambassador for the last 20 years as the Fu-jitsu master teaching a family of students about how they can defeat winter and stay warm. He states they "must become a master of Fu-jitsu. He opens a wooden box and shows them an air conditioner remote control. The advertisement then shows scenes of Mark Taylor performing various martial arts moves while explaining that the device lets consumers control the flow of heat in their home, and that consumers will receive a pre-paid visa card worth up to \$400.

THE COMPLAINT

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

This ad's depiction of martial arts in a stereotypical Asian setting is highly culturally insensitive, to the extent that I would consider it racist, and thus a breach of section 2.1 of the AANA Code of Ethics.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE





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

Dear Sir/Madam

*RE: FUJITSU GENERAL
TELEVISION COMMERCIAL
COMPLAINT REFERENCE 0297/18*

REASON FOR CONCERN: "This ad's depiction of martial arts in a stereotypical Asian setting is highly culturally insensitive, to the extent that I would consider it racist, and thus a breach of section 2.1 of the AANA Code of Ethics."

We refer to the letter received on 25 June 2018 in relation to the above complaint.

We have considered the complaint and the advertisement in question in light of the provisions of the AANA Code of Ethics ("the Code").

We note that the nature of the complaint relates specifically to the concern that the advertisement in question contains material which is culturally insensitive. We have carefully considered the Code, and have assessed its provisions against the content of this advertisement. We submit that the advertisement does not breach the Code on any of the grounds set out in the same.

We note that provision 2.1 of the Code sets out that "Advertising or Marketing Communication 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 race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief."

We note that the advertisement in question does not include any material that discriminates against or vilifies any person or section of the community. The advertisement does feature a family performing martial arts in a stereotypical oriental martial arts style dojo setting, led by former Australian cricket captain Mark Taylor, however this is not in itself racist or discriminatory.

We note that martial arts is practiced by people of multiple cultures, including families such as those depicted in the advertisement, and whilst martial arts may have its origins in eastern countries, practice of it is by no means exclusive to the same. Further, the depiction of the martial arts is not negative towards, nor derogatory or ridiculing of, any eastern or Asian cultures. The advertisement is not intended to cause any offence, rather, it is a reflection of our proud Japanese heritage, presented in a family friendly manner.



We note that our company's values include showing respect and consideration of opinion and diversity. We are a strong corporate citizen and an advocate for inclusiveness and diversity in the work place, and we embrace the opportunity to also demonstrate this. We are disappointed that someone found the advertisement offensive which was not the intention of the advertisement. Rather, it is intended as a light-hearted and family friendly depiction of a well-recognised practice that is not only reminiscent of the Fujitsu's own Japanese heritage but also intended to highlight our respect and pride around the same whilst operating in Australia for the last 40 years. In our view most reasonable audience members will recognise and appreciate the same, and view the advertisement as intended.

Accordingly, we submit that the advertisement does not breach provision 2.1 of the Code, nor any other provision of the Code.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement is racist.

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

The Panel noted that this television advertisement features former Australian cricket captain Mark Taylor as a Fujitsu master teaching a family about how they can defeat winter and stay warm.

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 Practice Note to Section 2.1 of the Code which 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 racist

The Panel considered the advertiser's response that the advertisement is not negative towards, nor derogatory or ridiculing of, any eastern or Asian cultures.



The Panel considered that the setting of the advertisement, a temple on a mountain, in combination with the martial arts theme does depict a stereotypical situation associated with some Asian cultures.

The Panel considered that martial arts is historically associated with some Asian cultures, however considered that martial arts are now practiced all over the world and are not solely specific to one culture.

The Panel noted that 'Fujitsu' is a brand name and not a style of martial arts and considered that the use of the term Fujitsu does not specifically identify any one culture or martial arts discipline.

The Panel acknowledged that some members of the community may view this advertisement as cultural appropriation, however considered that Fujitsu is a Japanese company and the depiction of the 'Fujitsu' martial arts scene was consistent with their brand name and the heritage of the company.

The Panel considered that Mark Taylor is a long time Australian brand ambassador for the Japanese brand, and that the depiction of him as a martial arts master is in line with the message of the advertisement and his association with the company.

The Panel considered that the advertisement treats the situation in a positive, aspirational and respectful light, and considered that this was not a negative stereotype of any culture.

The Panel determined that the advertisement does not discriminate against or vilify a person or section of the community on account of race, and did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

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

