



Case Report

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| 1 | Case Number | 0331/11 |
| 2 | Advertiser | Kids Warehouse |
| 3 | Product | Retail |
| 4 | Type of Advertisement / media | TV |
| 5 | Date of Determination | 14/09/2011 |
| 6 | DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

ISSUES RAISED

2.5 - Language Use appropriate language

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

A series of graphic screen showing Kids Warehouse logo and product interspersed with “Roller Doors” painted with SMS style “Teen Talk” expressions. One of these reads "WTF" and is accompanied by a sad face.

THE COMPLAINT

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

One of the placards contains the letters "WTF" in large font.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to what I feel is a frivolous complaint. Firstly, the commercial in question is not for Forty Winks, but for “Kids Warehouse”.

Secondly the product in question was bedding and bedroom furniture, not Toys. Finally, the "Placard" referred to in the complaint does not say WTF; it reads "WTF?" with a "Sad Face" underneath. I am, therefore, unsure what exactly is supposed to contravene "2.5 Language- Use appropriate language"? "WTF?" with a "Sad Face" means "Why the face?", an expression well known and used amongst young people and families and derived from the Television Show "Modern Family"; exactly the demographic this commercial is aimed at. The commercial received a W rating and was placed accordingly due to our understanding there may be out of touch and crude minded people like the complainant out there. I do not use an agency. I buy my own media and have my Television commercials produced by WIN Television in Albury. WIN Television actually surveyed several teenage girls who instantly responded that WTF? Did in fact mean "Why the Face" and the only other response given was "Welcome to Facebook" Considering the complainants "reason for concern" is based on an incorrect reading, and does not give any reason as to why they have a concern with the letters WTF, I would ask the ASB to dismiss the complaint.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (the "Board") considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the "Code").

The Board noted the complainant's concerns that the advertisement used language that is unacceptable and inappropriate.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.5 of the Code. Section 2.5 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances and strong or obscene language shall be avoided."

The Board noted that it has previously considered advertisements which have used acronyms to appeal to a younger adult market. Consistent with previous decisions the Board considered that the use of the acronym 'WTF' was not of itself strong or obscene language and could mean a variety of things.

The Board considered it unlikely that that very young children would understand the acronym as having any meaning. The Board also considered that older children and adults may notice the advertisement on the basis of the acronym but that in conjunction with the image of the 'sad face' it is reasonable that the WTF is consistent with the modern term, "Why the Face?" The Board further considered that the use of WTF may be understood as "What the Fuck?" by some members of the community, but that the use of the term WTF was, of itself, not language which is necessarily strong or obscene, or inappropriate in the circumstances.

The Board noted that the advertisement could be seen by children but considered that most members of the community would consider that the language in the advertisement was not inappropriate and was not strong or obscene.

The Board considered that the use of the acronym was not, in the context of this advertisement, inappropriate in the circumstances.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not use language considered strong or obscene, was appropriate for the advertisement and therefore did not breach section 2.5 of the Code.

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