



Ad Standards Community Panel
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Case Report

1. Case Number :	0334-20
2. Advertiser :	Rascal + Friends
3. Product :	Toiletries
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	TV - On Demand
5. Date of Determination	11-Nov-2020
6. DETERMINATION :	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.5 Language

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This TV on demand advertisement features a woman telling a story about a trip to the supermarket. She says, "Recently I was at the supermarket buying my Rascal and Friends nappies, as I was walking I maneuvered the cart to make room for some ladies coming towards me and I just bumped the corner of it into the shelf. My toddler said very clearly – " for f*cks sake" and these two ladies looked at me in shock and said "Did he just say what I thought he said?" I didn't quite know how to respond but I just got out of there as quick as I could.

The advertisement includes vision of the woman and her son in the supermarket, and the young boy mouths 'for fucks sake' in sync with the woman telling the story. The swear work is beeped out.

THE COMPLAINT

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

When the young boy turned around and stating "what the f". The f word was not beeped out. It was clear what the word was and the intention. This is not appropriate for an ad during a program rated PG. Furthermore, this phrase and context should not be used in advertising at all.*

*The advertisement for Rascal & Friends nappies at Coles uses the beeped Fu*K during its advertisement. It also posts the word "sh*try" on the screen. This sane advertisement is available on their Facebook page.*



The timing of this add is not appropriate as many children are awake and viewing tv at this time.

Even though the expletive is "beeped" out, the word is still clearly discernible. Attached is the video off their Facebook page which is the same one I viewed off 9now. This add is not clever, witty, or funny. It's cheap, crude, vulgar, humour not appropriate for this time frame.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The advertisement in question is part of a wider brand campaign called "Real Parenting Stories" that is designed to show the real and relatable side of parenting. The campaign's goal was to promote Rascal + Friends premium diapers in a lighthearted, relatable, and humorous way to parents within our target market. The campaign is comprised of six stories (and videos) based on real experiences shared with us by parents in the Rascal + Friends community. The campaign was created for our target audience, being parents aged 22-44. In all media placements we ensured that the advertisement was targeted towards this group across social and digital channels.

*The advertisement ran over a 3 week period on Facebook, Instagram, and Xaxis Prime TV (online video). In all paid media placements, the advertisement was only shown to the target audience outlined above. We wanted to ensure that the story as shared by mum, Mallory was portrayed in a way that was accurate, effective and relatable, but also respectful to the wider community. With this in mind and in consultation with our media and creative agency, we ensured the swear word from Linda's story was beeped out and displayed as "f*cks" on screen.*

We have reviewed the code of ethics and relevant standards and believe our advertisement, and the mediums it was distributed on, meets the standard set out in the Section Two of the AANA Code of Ethics. We believe the advertisement was appropriate for the target audience and in the circumstances within which it was shown.

Feedback from our community on the advertisement is that it is funny and relatable, especially as it has come from a real parent in our community.

We sincerely apologies for any offence the advertisement has caused any viewers, this was never our intention and the feedback has been passed on internally. The advertisement is no longer running with paid media spend, but can still be found on our social media pages.

THE DETERMINATION

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



The Panel noted the complainants' concerns that the beeped out word is still discernible and is not appropriate for viewing in programming where children may be watching.

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

Section 2.5: Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances (including appropriate for the relevant audience and medium). Strong or obscene language shall be avoided.

The Panel noted the advertisement aired on TV On Demand and had therefore not received a ClearAds classification restricting its broadcast time and noted that the relevant audience would be broad and would include children.

The Panel noted it had previously upheld a complaint about an advertisement that featured a child swearing in case 0466/17 in which:

"The Board noted that whilst most members of the community would not expect a child to actually say the word "fucking" in a television advertisement, in the Board's view the way the beep is used has the effect of accentuating the word and makes it appear that the child is using a strong swear word... The Board noted that the depiction of the boy and the manner in which he speaks is playing on the well-known behaviour of celebrity chef Gordon Ramsey. The Board reiterated that advertisers should take care when using children in advertisements to mimic the behaviour of adults and that this includes using language that may sometimes be considered acceptable for an adult but not children..."

However, the Panel noted it had previously dismissed an advertisement that featured a child swearing in case 0109/157 in which:

"The Board noted the complainants concerns in particular that the young boy copies his father and uses the word 'bloody' himself. The Board agreed that the overall tone of the advertisement was highlighting a camping trip and time spent with a father and son and that the son copying his father in this instance was not abusive or angry and that the father is not condoning or encouraging the child to swear or to use inappropriate language toward other drivers."

The Panel noted the advertiser response that the swear word was beeped out and displayed on the screen as "f*cks".

The Panel considered that the combination of the child's whole sentence and the word displayed on screen means that it is clear what word is being said, and that most members of the community, including children, would understand that the boy is saying 'fucks sake'. However, the Panel noted that the word had been sufficiently



beeped out and could not be heard.

The Panel considered that the word is not used in a manner that is aggressive or demeaning, but rather is in the context of the mother telling an embarrassing parenting story. The Panel considered that the advertisement did not suggest that it is appropriate for children to use the 'f' word, rather it suggested that the child's use of the word was embarrassing.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not use strong or obscene language and that the language used was appropriate for the circumstances of telling an embarrassing story.

Section 2.5 conclusion

The Panel determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.5 of the Code.

Conclusion

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