



Case Report

1	Case Number	0336/10
2	Advertiser	Unilever Australasia
3	Product	House goods/services
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	11/08/2010
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Various children describe the different activities they have "had a go" at, all of which entail them getting their clothes stained with either grass, chocolate, dirt or mud.

A female voice over describes new OMO with the "extra power of pre-treaters" and we see a bottle of OMO with lots of little bottles coming out of its open top. These bottles are all white with the words "pre-treaters" written on them in black.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The advert kept showing in prime time high children's viewing and the ad was done in a way where the kids were centre stage to the advert. The boys were depicted "having a go" at many adventurous type things exploration and such. The girl in the ad got dirty from eating chocolate from her cooking having a go that she did not know how to eat without making a mess. The implication seemed to be clearly that the girl's role is to cook and later to do the family washing to perfection whereas men do not do the washing but also that boys do adventure games.

From my observation many young boys also like to cook cakes and most children are not getting their whole face covered with chocolate in the process. I do believe many girls like to do some adventure things also. It would be better if a girl rode a bike through a muddy puddle or had a go at soccer or such. My nieces play soccer and at 7 the youngest started martial arts.

My point is that children should not be viewing images that imply that girls only have a go at cooking (and dumb at that with ability to even eat it) or to grow up to be the person who does the washing.

Even if they cannot show the guys doing washing they need to show at least one girl doing soccer or building something. I am very disgusted with this sexist ad that is from the dark ages. Children should not be exposed to this sexist garbage.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We submit that the TVC does not portray people or depict material which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of gender as set out in section 2.1.

By way of background, the TVC features several scenes of children getting dirty by "having a go" at various activities such as baking a chocolate cake, building a rocket ship and sliding in mud. These activities are then followed by footage and voice over describing the cleaning attributes of Omo and its effects on removing stains. The main message of the TVC is that children get dirty and Omo is a product that can remove that dirt and the stains that come with child's play.

The complainant's main objection appears to be that the TVC depicts a little girl baking a cake and little boys "having a go at many adventurous type things, exploration and such" and that the TVC is discriminatory on the basis that there are no girls participating in the adventurous outdoor activities or boys baking cakes.

While it is not Unilever's intention to depict advertising that is discriminatory and in particular to depict gender discrimination, we respectfully submit that in this case there is actually a girl featured in the scene where a group of children are engaged in the activity of building a rocket which we would argue does depict girls participating in adventurous activities. In our view it could be argued that this scene encourages both girls and boys to build rocket ships and engage in outdoor activities.

We respectfully submit that reasonable viewers would understand the context of the TVC and would not view it as material that is discriminatory based on gender.

Approvals

Unilever is a responsible advertiser and has numerous internal review processes, including review by Unilever's Legal and Corporate Relations Departments to critique all advertisements to ensure compliance with legal and ethical considerations.

Conclusion

We submit that we are not portraying people or depicting material which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of gender as set out in section 2.1.

In summary, we submit that the context of the TVC is well within Standards and that the TVC complies with Section 2.1 of the Code.

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 concerns that the advertisement reinforces gender stereotypes.

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

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 noted the advertisement was for a soap detergent and featured children taking part in activities which resulted in their clothes getting dirty.

The Board acknowledged that part of the advertisement does depict boys and girls in stereotypical roles but considered that there is no suggestion that anything is wrong with this or that it’s the only things they do. The Board noted that the rocket building scene does feature a girl as well as boys.

The Board considered that, in this instance, the advertisement did not discriminate or vilify a person or section of the community - in this context boys or girls- on account of ... sex, but encouraged advertisers to avoid unnecessary stereotypical depictions.

The Board determined the advertisement 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.