



Case Report

1	Case Number	0338/16
2	Advertiser	Honey Birdette
3	Product	Lingerie
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Poster
5	Date of Determination	14/09/2016
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender
- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - women
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This poster advertisement features an image of a female model looking over her shoulder at the camera. She is wearing strappy lingerie that reveals most of her buttocks. The poster is on the inside of Honey Birdette stores and features the text, "To HELL with LOVE".

THE COMPLAINT

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

This type of overtly sexualised advertising is not appropriate in a public place. It is detrimental to members of the general public and is clearly in breach of Section 2.4 of the Code of Ethics: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and unity with sensitivity to the relevant audience."

A large proportion of the audience subjected to these inappropriate images are children. As a teacher professional, I am fully aware of the detrimental impact early sexualisation has on children of all ages. It has been widely documented that exposure to such images negatively affects children's body image and attitudes towards the opposite sex. It is irresponsible to disregard the psychological development of the plethora of children who walk by this

advertising for mere financial gain.

As a woman, I do not feel comfortable walking past these types of harmful images. They are images that objectify and disrespect women. I appeal to you to please rectify this situation to ensure they are removed from view of the general public.

This add was on a giant poster in the store's front window. It was school holidays and this poster was where school children and children under the age of five years could clearly see it. The poster was inappropriate by community standards. It was inappropriate for people under the age of 18 to be viewing - parental consent not considered due to children seeing this advertisement. It was offensive to me and objectifying of females, and definitely not empowering. It disregarded extensive research that supports this type of material as being harmful to children and to adults. It promoted unsafe practices - emotional and physical, such as bondage and marketed this to children and adults. It presented unrealistic expectations about females and therefore promoted incorrect and harmful information. It denied parents their right to ensure their children are safe in a shared family space such as Westfield shopping centres. The add did not show the woman's face, therefore dehumanising her and women that buy the products; this also leaves her and other females more vulnerable to exploitation and to violence. It positioned women in the space of only serving a purpose as it relates to meeting men's needs. It created an imbalance of power dynamics between men and women and between the media and women.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We are very sensitive to the views of our customers and greatly appreciate this feedback. The style on the poster is our current selling range and our stores are all about making women feel safe and sophisticated.

We are chain for woman, by woman. 95% of our 130,000plus customers are women.

I believe in increasing women's power in society.

Please be assured that we put a lot of time and effort into ensuring that it is not offensive whilst also representative of our brand. We also focus test it with a wide range of friends and family to ensure it is sophisticated.

I hope this helps you understand that to market and advertise lingerie, a certain level of skin needs to be exposed, however we do this in a way that empowers woman rather than demean them.

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 complainants' concerns that the advertisement depicts overtly sexualised images of women which are disrespectful and objectifying and not appropriate for a broad audience which includes children.

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

The Board 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 Board noted this poster advertisement features an image of a woman in lingerie with her back to the viewer looking over her shoulder. The Board noted the woman is wearing a g-string and the poster is displayed inside Honey Birdette stores.

The Board noted that the pose of the model in the advertisement is in keeping with typical lingerie advertising and considered that it is not inappropriate for an advertiser to depict women wearing the advertised product. The Board also considered that in the context of a lingerie advertisement a depiction of women wearing this lingerie is not of itself a depiction which discriminates against or vilifies women.

The Board acknowledged that some members of the community would find a depiction of a woman in lingerie to be disrespectful but considered that the overall impression of the advertisement does not present women in an inferior position or in a manner that is ridiculing or humiliating.

The Board considered that the current advertisements did not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of gender.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board then considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.2 of the Code. Section 2.2 of the Code states: "Advertising or marketing communications should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people."

The Board noted that in order to be in breach of this section of the Code the image would need to use sexual appeal in a manner that is both exploitative and degrading.

The Board noted that the lingerie is available for purchase in store and that it is reasonable to expect the advertiser to use available product in the advertising for that store.

The Board noted that the product is for women and that the styling and colours used are consistent with the types of lingerie which is aimed at the female market. The Board considered that the use of a woman modelling lingerie is not inappropriate.

The Board noted the complainants' concerns that the advertisement is objectifying and that by not showing the woman's face it is dehumanising. The Board noted that although the woman in the advertisement is not facing the camera the Board considered that most of her face is visible as she is looking over her shoulder and in the Board's view the advertisement is focusing on the whole of the woman and what she is wearing (the product) and not on a specific part of her body.

The Board acknowledged that some members of the community may find the use of a woman in lingerie to be exploitative but the Board considered that in the context of a lingerie advertisement it is not exploitative to use such images and in the Board's view the manner in which the woman is depicted is not degrading to this woman or to women in general.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.4 of the Code. Section 2.4 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience".

The Board noted that the woman in the advertisement is wearing underwear which is sold in the shop and considered that the image is relevant to the product.

The Board noted that a large portion of the woman's buttocks are visible but considered that this level of nudity is not inappropriate in the context of a poster inside a lingerie shop. The Board noted the lingerie is sexy but considered that this is the style of lingerie sold in store and in the Board's view the model's pose is not overly sexual or inappropriate in the context of a lingerie advertisement.

The Board noted the taglines for the posters: 'Don't hold back' and 'To Hell with Love' and considered that these taglines are mildly and playfully sexually suggestive and the overall impression given by the images and wording is not inappropriate in the context of the advertised product.

The Board noted there is a level of community concern about the sexualisation of children. The Board noted that this advertisement is placed inside Honey Birdette stores and acknowledged that while in some stores the advertisement could be visible to passers-by in the Board's view the relevant audience is more likely to be adults who have willingly entered a Honey Birdette store.

Overall the Board considered that the advertisement did treat the issue of sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

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

