



Case Report

1	Case Number	0380/16
2	Advertiser	Expedia
3	Product	Travel
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Pay
5	Date of Determination	14/09/2016
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The Advertisement tells the story of a family putting together the ultimate holiday by using a tablet (such as an iPad) to swipe the family into various holiday-related locations and scenarios. The family bounces into each scenario as if they've been thrown there. The mother uses the tablet throughout the ad, only discarding at the end when they land in their agreed ultimate holiday scenario.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The ad shows a women firmly in control of her family, with two children and her husband reduced to infants in her shadow. She neither consults them or anyone else.

The husband is reduced to the role of a third child - the other two being actual children. But he's less than that, being the butt of visual jokes in at least two scenes. In one scene, the family are shown on a ski lift, with the husband all injured and she says, "forgot you can't ski".

The general frame of the ad is that the women is completely in charge and the man is a nobody whose interests don't count.

I found the portrayal offensive and sexist.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Complaint reference number: 0380/16 (Complaint)

We refer to the complaint received in relation to the advertisement for Wotif.com featuring a family-of-four compiling and jumping between various holiday-related scenarios and activities before finally agreeing that floating in a hotel pool is, "Perfect" (Advertisement).

Summary Response

We do not consider that the Advertisement breaches Section 2, or any other section, of the AANA Code of Ethics. As set out in further detail below, we take our advertising responsibilities seriously and have a strong compliance track record. All advertisements relating to Wotif.com, including the Advertisement, are subject to a number of strict internal and external processes against which any proposed advertisement is considered.

Comments in relation to the complaint

The Advertising Standards Bureau requests that we address all parts of Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics, being sections 2.1 (Discrimination or vilification), 2.2 (Use of sexual appeal in an exploitative or degrading manner), 2.3 (Violence), 2.4 (Sex, sexuality and nudity), 2.5 (Language) and 2.6 (Health and Safety). Our response in relation to these sections in the context of the Advertisement and the complaint is set out in below:

2.1 Discrimination or vilification

The Advertisement does 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.

While the Complaint alleges that, "...the man is a nobody whose interests don't count", we draw the Board's attention to the fact that:

(a) in the white water rafting scene, it is the mother who is screaming;

(b) in the yoga scene, the mother swipes them out of the scene and onto the next scene immediately upon the father looking towards her while saying, "Oh, I feel it enough!";

(c) in the stand-up paddle-boarding scene, both the mother and father fall off their boards, landing in the water; and

(d) in the final scene (the pool scene), the mother only discards the tablet after both the mother and father state to each other, in agreement, "Perfect".

The Advertisement is intended to be humorous with both the mother and father portrayed in a comedic way similar to a slap stick style movie or scene. The Advertisement contains reference to common holiday scenarios and mishaps that would be relatable to the general public and does not mock or make light of any individual's skill or ability when performing the activities required of the various holiday scenarios. In light of the above, it is evident that the claim that the man is treated as "a nobody whose interests don't count" is wholly untrue and grossly misrepresents the nature of the Advertisement and the portrayal of the father in the Advertisement.

As none of the criteria evidencing discrimination or vilification are depicted in the Advertisement, the content of the Advertisement does not amount to a breach of Section 2.1 of the AANA Code of Ethics.

2.2 Use of sexual appeal in an exploitative or degrading manner

The Advertisement does not employ sexual appeal in any manner.

In the various holiday scenarios, the couple are presented as equals (for example, both the father and mother fall from their stand-up paddle-board) and the family is playful in their interactions.

2.3 Violence

The Advertisement does not present or portray any act violence or any threat or suggestion of violence.

2.4 Sex, sexuality and nudity

The Advertisement does not display or portray any form of sex, sexuality or nudity or any provocative or other sexualised conduct.

2.5 Language

The Advertisement does not use any strong or obscene language.

All language used in the Advertisement, whether by the characters within the Advertisement or the voiceover is appropriate.

2.6 Health and Safety

The Advertisement does not depict material contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety.

While the Advertisement jumps between holiday-related scenarios and shows certain mishaps in a light-hearted and comical manner (such as the stand-up paddle-boarding scene and the ski lift scene) it is evident that:

(a) each scene is very brief and aimed only at providing a quick indication of the various destinations and activities available to be booked on Wotif.com;

(b) no person is shown sustaining any form of injury; and

(c) the Advertisement does not depict, encourage or condone any dangerous activities or behaviours.

The intention of the Advertisement is to promote the range of online booking services offered by Wotif.com. The portrayal of the fictitious mishaps is intended to be humorous and is not suggestive of causing actual harm to a person.

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 is sexist toward men.

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 television advertisement features a woman using a tablet to put together the ideal family holiday and that each time she swipes the tablet we see the family transported to the particular holiday scenario she is looking at.

The Board noted the complainant’s concern that the man is treated like another child in the family but considered that although this advertisement shows the woman in charge of

booking the family holiday there is no suggestion that the man cannot also book a holiday but rather that in this scenario it is the woman who is doing it. The Board noted that when the mum announces it is holiday time her husband, as well as the two children, lean in to watch her doing the research on her tablet and considered that this is suggestive of the activity being inclusive of all family members.

The Board noted the complainant's concern that the man is the butt of visual jokes but considered that when the woman comments that she forgot the man can't ski she then moves on to another holiday scenario which in the Board's view is suggestive of the woman caring about what the man can, and would want to, do while on holiday. The Board noted that the family are presented as a solid family unit throughout the advertisement and considered that there is no suggestion that the dad is thought any less of because he is not the person doing the research and booking for the holiday.

The Board considered that the advertisement 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.

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