



Case Report

1	Case Number	0393/14
2	Advertiser	General Pants Group
3	Product	Clothing
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Internet - Social
5	Date of Determination	08/10/2014
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - women
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Image on Facebook of women in bikinis and the text, "Wet Dreams".

THE COMPLAINT

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

Unnecessary sexually suggestive material drawing attention to the poster advertising clothing. This is offensive to the general public and inappropriate to be displayed for all including children to be exposed to.

The advertisement suggests that women should feel flattered to be the subject of a man's "wet dream" - as if this is desirable or even acceptable. Young girls are impressionable and should not be subject to such offensive and degrading over sexualisation. Per women of tomorrow should think more of themselves than this.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The complaints allege the wording in the Advertisement could be considered offensive due breaches of section 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4 AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics (Discrimination or Vilification Gender, Objectification Exploitative and degrading – Women and general Sex / sexuality / nudity). General Pants is careful to consider the seriousness of these complaints and would like the Board to consider the following information in its review.

- *General Pants Co. is a retailer of popular fashion brands – our business is built on the brands we carefully edit to stock.*
- *General Pants Co. is launching swimwear for the first time*
- *General Pants Co. internal values state we exist to ‘disrupt the average’ and this attitude is seen in everything we do (including this campaign)*
- *We launched Swimwear campaign with 22 male and female models wearing our product while going down a Giant Waterslide Runway Show – see video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6PaC0NMFG8>*
- *General Pants Co. collaborated with twelve (12) selected brands to develop this Swimwear campaign*
- *Store windows, General Pants Co. website and social channels (such as Facebook) are a portal to our product offering including launch of new products such as Swimwear*
- *In the case of the Advertisement, General Pants Co. devised a campaign with the tagline Wet Dreams – phrased tongue in cheek and therefore not intended for the audience to take seriously*
- *We partnered with Atlantis, the Palm, Dubai who have the largest water slide in the Southern Hemisphere to offer a competition as part of the Swimwear campaign*
- *The competition is a trip for two (2) to go to Atlantis, the Palm, Dubai and go to their Water Park hence the tagline win your ultimate “Wet Dream”*
- *The imagery in the campaign was generated from the Swimwear launch which is why the models are wet – they have just gone down a giant water slide*
- *At no time were any such references of discrimination, exploiting or degrading*

women or to be offensive to the audience in our vision.

- *The overall message of the campaign is about the collective of brands, not a focus on any one image.*
- *General Pants Co. is a supporter of youth employment (employing 1500 team members annually) and youth related community organisations*
- *We officially partner with Oasis Youth Support Network to provide employment support, event partnerships (City to Surf, Christmas parties), cash and product donations and other like activities and would not go to market with offensive imagery or content to our youth or women.*

The further complaints now allege the wording in the Advertisement could be considered offensive breaching section 2.5 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics. General Pants is careful to consider the seriousness of these complaints and would like the Board to consider the following additional information in regards to the campaign wording in its review

- *General Pants launched swimwear by having a non-traditional runway show to showcase the collections. An event was created using a giant 50 meter waterslide, where both male and female models slid down a slide and got wet. You can view the content here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6PaC0NMFG8>*
- *Part of the campaign is centred around giving away a prize to ‘Atlantis - The Palm Dubai’ where consumers can win a trip to one of the world’s largest waterslides/water parks. This is conveyed through our creative of people going down a slide and a factor in the campaign wording. <http://www.generalpants.com.au/content/competition-atlantis-the-palm>*
- *The wording ‘Wet’ was used to represent models down the slide and the relevance to swimwear and ‘Dream’ was used to represent the dream holiday people could win.*

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 on the advertiser’s facebook page includes images and wording that is offensive and degrading to women. The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s response. 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 the elements of the facebook page under complaint features a photograph of a group of young women posed in bikinis. The page also includes the words “wet dreams” placed adjacent to the main picture.

The Board considered the depiction of women in swimwear promoting a fashion store that now includes a swimwear range and noted that the pose of the models in the image is in keeping with typical swimwear advertising and that the swimmers fully cover all the models’ private areas and does not amount to a depiction that is inappropriate.

The Board noted that the primary focus of the page relates to products available from the advertiser including women’s bikini’s, and that the styling and colours used are consistent with the type of swimwear which is aimed at the female market. The Board considered that the advertisement is aimed at women not men and that the use of women modelling swimwear to appeal to other women is not inappropriate and in this instance does not amount to an overall image which uses sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading. The Board considered that the images do not portray the women in a negative light and did not breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

The Board then 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 models are wearing swimmers that are sold in the shop and available online and that the facebook page also includes images of other fashion items available for purchase. The Board considered that the images are relevant to the product. The Board noted there is a level of community concern about the representation of women in advertising and noted that the advertisement appears on the company’s own facebook page and in this scenario is an unlikely to be viewed by young children. The Board considered that the target audience would be older teenagers and young women looking to shop online for both swimwear and fashion items.

The Board considered that the reference to “wet dreams” not the primary focus of the advertisement and is incidental to the main image. The Board noted the advertiser’s response that this phrase is connected to a broader competition to win an overseas trip to Atlantis, the Palm, in Dubai. The Board noted the sexual connotation of the phrase and acknowledged that some members of the community may be concerned with the inclusion of that phrase in the context of images of women in bikinis. On balance, the Board considered that in the broader context of a competition to win a holiday, the advertisement did treat the issue of sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant online 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.

