



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1	Case Number	0550/18
2	Advertiser	Insight Timer
3	Product	Health Products
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Internet-Social-Inst
5	Date of Determination	23/01/2019
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.2 - Objectification Degrading - women
- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative - women
- 2.6 - Health and Safety Body Image

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This Instagram advertisement features an image of a woman in a white bathing suit standing on the beach from behind, and the text "Growth requires a temporary surrender of security. Gail Sheehy"

THE COMPLAINT

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

Insight Timer, a global meditation app based out of Sydney, Australia, regularly features on its Instagram feed quotes placed on images of women wearing scantily clad bikinis or wet clothes, thereby objectifying women. All men featured on their Instagram feed are fully clothed and no man is featured wearing similar attire to the women. There is no relationship to the images of the women and the quote, so it is unnecessary to feature women in swimsuits as this image does:
https://www.instagram.com/p/Bq1ZtQuBjU_/



This clearly relates to Code 2.2 'Advertising or Marketing Communication shall not employ sexual appeal'.

As an Instagram user and advocate for Insight Timer, I posted the comment to this post hoping this issue would be brought to their attention: 'great quote, but hoped we had moved on from gratuitous photos of women in bikinis'. This comment was deleted from their feed.

I am great supporter of Insight Timer, so submit this complaint reluctantly, but their reaction to my comment (to delete it) indicates ignoring this issue and the related Code.

It may be valuable to offer additional context even though I appreciate this is more branding than advertising and marketing communications. Insight Timer is a leader in the meditation app space. It boasts around 5.5 million members with the goal of increasing this to 50 million as indicated on its Instagram feed. Members of Insight Timer range in age from children to seniors. The app boasts more than 6000 groups where members can seek support, including for mental health (around 20,000 members collectively) and a range of weight awareness groups (around 12,000 members collectively). Many members express in group forums, including women, they struggle with self-esteem, weight issues, anorexia among other eating disorders. Therefore, understanding Insight Timer's client-base further raises concerns of the selection of images of very slim women in bikinis on its Instagram feed (with close to 54,000 followers). Being a leader in the wellness industry, it is important Insight Timer sets an example for all people, especially their younger clients, that bodies do come in all shapes and sizes and we should celebrate this – not promote an almost unattainable figure.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Advertiser did not provide a response.

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 complainant's concern that the advertisement is objectifying of the model and promotes an unattainable body type.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser did not respond.

The Panel 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 or degrading of any individual or group of people.”

The Panel noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement is objectifying of the model and her depiction in a swimsuit is unrelated to the product being promoted.

The Panel noted that the advertised product is a meditation app.

The Panel first considered whether the advertisement used sexual appeal.

The Panel noted the Instagram advertisement featured an image of a woman wearing a bikini on a beach. The woman is depicted from behind and the text “growth requires a temporary surrender of security – Gail Sheehy” is superimposed over the top of the image.

The Panel considered that the depiction of a woman in a bikini could be considered to contain sexual appeal.

The Panel then considered whether the advertisement used sexual appeal in a manner that was exploitative of an individual or group of people.

The Panel noted the AANA Practice Note which provides guidance on the meaning of the terms exploitative and degrading:

Exploitative - (a) taking advantage of the sexual appeal of a person, or group of people, by depicting them as objects or commodities; or (b) focussing on their body parts where this bears no direct relevance to the product or service being advertised. Degrading – lowering in character or quality a person or group of people.

The Panel considered that the depiction of the woman was consistent with visualisation or meditation imagery which often features beach or water scenes and was not a depiction which suggested the woman was an object or commodity.

The Panel considered that the model in the advertisement was well covered and that there was no particular focus on her body parts. The Panel considered the focus of the image is on the quote and is not on the woman herself.

The Panel considered that the depiction of the model and the accompanying text did not lower the character or quality of the model and did not degrade the model.

On that basis, the Panel determined that the advertisement did not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative or degrading of an individual and did not breach Section 2.2 of the Code.



The Panel considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.6 of the Code. Section 2.6 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety”.

The Panel noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement features an image of a slim woman in a bikini which was a promotion of an almost unattainable figure.

The Panel noted the Practice Note for Section 2.6 Provides:

“Advertising must not portray an unrealistic ideal body image by portraying body shapes or features that are unrealistic or unattainable through healthy practices.”

The Panel considered that the woman in the advertisement is slim, however considered that she appears to be a healthy body size.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not portray a woman with an unrealistic or unattainable body shape and that the advertisement did not depict material contrary to prevailing community standards on body image. The Panel considered that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach any other section of the Code the Panel dismissed the complaint.

