



CASE REPORT

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Complaint reference number | 229/08 |
| 2. Advertiser | Harvey Norman |
| 3. Product | House goods/services |
| 4. Type of advertisement | Print |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1
Portrayal of sex/sexuality/nudity – section 2.3 |
| 6. Date of determination | Wednesday, 9 July 2008 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This print advertisement is an eight page catalogue for Harvey Norman electrical products. A young woman is featured on several pages. She is shown wearing a variety of different lingerie items - bras and underpants. The young woman appears on the screen of some of the products being advertised and is also shown holding some of the items that are being advertised.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I found this advertisement highly offensive in its objectification of the woman and in its suggestion that to show a woman posing seductively in lingerie would sell electrical products.

The campaign has not been run with any hint of irony or sensitivity and there seems no reason for this woman to be wearing nothing but underwear, high heels and a sultry expression beyond some kind of pedestrian idea in the marketing department that "Sex Sells."

Furthermore, Empire is not a men's magazine: its readers include men, women and young people and this promotion isolates a good portion of its audience.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following:

In response to your queries, I provide the following information:

1. A copy of the advertisement (attached).

2. As the advertisement only appeared in print media, specifically in the Australian Consolidated Press Publications, "Ralph Magazine", "Men's Style", "FHM", and "Empire", a script was not prepared or required.

3. We acknowledge Ms. Frances Chapman's complaint with reference to her perception of the "objectification of the woman and in its suggestion that to show a woman posing seductively in lingerie would sell electrical products". Harvey Norman has not received this complaint directly. We regret that the images contained within the advertisement have offended Ms. Chapman. We have not received any complaints relating to this advertisement.

Upon receipt of the complaint we have reviewed the advertisement under Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics and advise that we do not consider the images to breach acceptable

standards of advertising, in particular, section 2.3.

4. The advertisement was published under Harvey Norman brand advertising by Generic Publications Pty Ltd. Generic Publications Pty Ltd commissioned ACP Magazines Pty Ltd to produce the advertisement in the four publications outlined above in point 2. Generic Publications Pty Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Harvey Norman Holdings Pty Ltd. ACP Magazines Pty Ltd is an unrelated and independent entity.

The advertisement was reviewed and authorized for publication under the provisions of the Harvey Norman Advertising Compliance Program.

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 and reviewed the advertisement under Sections 2.1 and 2.3 of the Code which deal with discrimination on the basis of gender and the portrayal of sex, sexuality and nudity.

The Board viewed the print advertisement and was divided in its opinion of this advertising material.

The Board discussed whether this advertisement objectified women and bought into a stereotype of branding products as sexy.

The Board then discussed whether this type of image suggested that women were merely goods and services to be bought.

The Board considered that the relevant audience of the publication. This audience is mainly young men and, that while people outside the target audience may consider these images to be in bad taste, the relevant audience would consider them as tongue in cheek humor consistent with the style of the publication they appeared in.

The Board was divided in its opinion of the acceptability of this advertisement however upon taking a vote decided that given the placement of the advertisement it was at the upper end of end what was acceptable and not in breach of Sections 2.1 or 2.3 of the Code.

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