



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	241/05
2. Advertiser	The One Centre
3. Product	Professional Services
4. Type of advertisement	Print
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 13 September 2005
7. DETERMINATION	Upheld – discontinued or modified

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This print advertisement features a full-page photograph of an elderly female model named “*Dolores Smith*”. The model is wearing lingerie. On the second page of the advertisement, the following words appear in beige text against a black background: “*Old models don’t cut it anymore*”. Underneath this heading, the following words appear in small white font: “*The world has moved on. The old agency model doesn’t work anymore. People are starting to demand something more from brands than just differentiated communications. They’re wanting differentiated experiences. Which is why at the One Centre we offer expansive, strategic and creative capabilities with the one creative company...*”.

THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

“The impression conveyed by the image and slogans combined is that old advertising agencies are like older women: they are beyond their use-by date.”

“We consider this advertisement to be offensive in the extreme...”

“... Is this suggesting that people especially women of a mature age are redundant in society/workplace/marriage/relationships... this ad is discriminatory and insulting to mature aged women and apparently there is another one of mature age men with the same implications on their website.”

“... The image is quite tasteful and not offensive (in my opinion at least), however the message that is attached at the back of the poster is distasteful and discriminatory to older people. The message says: “Old models don’t cut it any more”. The message and the picture in combination suggest that older people, especially older women are no longer of value and as such, require to be disposed of. This is shocking, discriminatory (both sexist and ageist), unwarranted and offensive.”

“... suggests that older women are not sexually attractive and implies that older women are not capable of creativity and innovation... this is an appalling example of bad taste and poor judgement. We must respect the wisdom, skills, abilities and talent of older people...”

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

“After reviewing the letters of complaint I have understood that complainants feel we are asserting that old people, in particular old women, have no value in our society: that we are being ageist and sexist.”

“The intention of the campaign was not to denigrate old people, or old women;”

“The campaign was designed to talk to marketing directors about reassessing their advertising service providers (we are a NEW MODEL brand advertising agency);”

“The intention of the campaign was to illustrate the fact – via parody – that while many advertising agencies continue to use images of young people, and parade themselves as fresh and innovate, the traditional advertising agency MODEL has not fundamentally changed in 50 years, despite the evolving marketing needs of businesses...”

“The use of elderly MODELS is a metaphor for our view that old advertising MODELS are not appropriate for businesses emerging marketing needs;”

“This is not a value judgement about old people’s role in society; moreover a comment about the appropriateness of behaving in a certain way when you are no longer suited to this task/role;”

“To further the point above, we absolutely believe that elderly people have an essential role to play in our society and should be treated – and should treat themselves – with the respect and dignity their age commands/demands.”

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 that the advertiser intended the advertisement to be humorous, however, it considered that the theme of the advertisement was a cruel attack on the parody employed.

The Board primarily considered clause 2.1 of the Code in its determination of this complaint. Clause 2.1 states that *“advertisements should not portray people or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of... age”*. The Board was of the view that the words: *“Old models don’t cut it anymore”* (which appear in larger font than the words in the adjacent paragraph) when used in conjunction with the images of the elderly model is material that clearly discriminates against or vilifies a person or a section of the community on account of their age.

The Board determined that the material contravened the provisions of the Code relating to the portrayal of people (age). Accordingly, the Board upheld the complaint.

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

The advertiser indicated that based on the Board’s determination, it would discontinue the advertising.