

Case Report

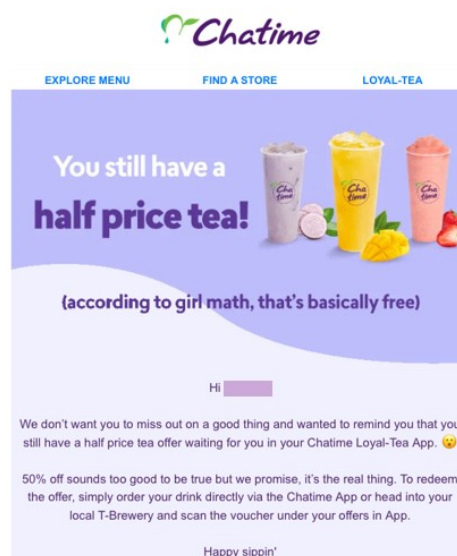
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| 1. Case Number : | 0056-24 |
| 2. Advertiser : | Chatime |
| 3. Product : | Food/Beverages |
| 4. Type of Advertisement/Media : | Email |
| 5. Date of Decision: | 20-Mar-2024 |
| 6. Decision: | Upheld – Modified or discontinued |

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.1 Discrimination or Vilification

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This email advertisement contained the "'50% off' 'According to Girl math that is basically free'".



THE COMPLAINT

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

This ad was emailed to me as part of my loyalty program. I am happy to receive emails from this company but the casual sexism is offensive. I have included a screenshot below but the essence is that girls cannot do maths.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The reference to 'girl math' used in the email header was engage audience through a social media trend.

The use of this term was to align with our audience in a relevant way, as they were the key audience contributing to the growth of this trend.

The reference to 'girl math' was one component of the communication, not the entire idea and overall impression of the communication. The term used was a humorous representation of purchasing behaviour that the social media.

The key message and majority of the communication was informing customers of an offer available to them for a limited time.

Chatime did not intend to portray our customers in a negative light or cause offence to any group of people. The use of this communication has been removed from market.

THE DECISION

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 sexist and offensive towards women.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser did not provide a response.

Section 2.1: Advertising or Marketing Communication shall 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.

The Panel noted the AANA Practice Note which provides guidance on the meaning of:

- Discrimination - unfair or less favourable treatment
- Vilification - humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred, contempt or ridicule
- Gender - male, female or trans-gender characteristics.

Does the advertisement portray material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person on account of gender?

The Panel noted the Practice Note which states:

“The depiction will be regarded as a breach if a negative impression is created by the imagery and language used in the advertisement of a person or group of people on the basis of a defined attribute listed above. Advertisements can humorously or satirically suggest stereotypical aspects of a group of people in society provided the overall impression of the advertisement does not convey a negative impression of people of that group on the basis of one or more of the attributes listed above.”

The Panel noted that the term “girl-math” originated on social media in about August 2023. The Panel considered that while the advertiser’s intention may have been to jump in on a trend, the advertisement was sent out in January, several months after the trend began.

The Panel noted that “girl math” is used as a humorous way to rationalize seemingly intricate and often ridiculous ways women may try to justify to themselves an extravagant or unnecessary expense. For example, in the context of “girl math” a discount on a purchase is seen as ‘extra’ or ‘free’ money.

The Panel considered that the notion of “girl-math” conveys an inherently unflattering perspective on women and their financial literacy, and a dumbing-down of decision making. The Panel considered that the concept is rooted in the idea that women are not good with money or mathematics and therefore lean on “girl-math” to justify their money-handling.

The Panel considered that this suggestion is condescending and promotes a negative gender trope.

Overall the Panel considered that, despite the attempt at humour and social media relevance, the advertisement does treat women unfairly and less favourably and does incite contempt and ridicule of women by promoting a negative stereotype that women, and only women, are bad with money or not smart enough to understand their purchasing decisions.

Section 2.1 conclusion

Finding that the advertisement did portray material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of gender or race, the Panel determined that the advertisement did breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

Conclusion

Finding that the advertisement did breach Section 2.1 of the Code, the Panel upheld the complaint.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE TO DECISION

Chatime did not intend to portray our customers in a negative light or cause offence to any group of people. The use of this communication has been removed from market.