

Overview:

1 ASA stands for Advertising Standards Authority; they discuss and decide whether a complaint advertisement must be removed from television if they break any of the codes of advertisement. The codes are developed by the ASA and cover the entire range of advertising activity through complaints of the public. It is free to complain about any advert at any given time. These complaints are reviewed and discussed and if the complaint is upheld it will be removed from TV, magazines and billboards. The advertisement I have chosen is a Pak'n'Save advertisement about meat week. It was a stick figure advertisement that began with a sign that said 'vegetarians' with a cross through it. This ad was found very offensive by the way vegetarians were ruled out and the way they were made fun of. The last part where the voiceover said, "ok vegetarians you can look now because there's a carrot and jokes fooled ya, that's a sausage." The complaint said this ad discriminates against vegetarians and makes fun of them. 2

Codes of Practice:

The complaints on this advert were... Basic Principles 2, 3 and 6 of the Code for people in Advertising

3 Rule #2: Advertisements should not portray people in a manner which is reasonably likely to cause serious or widespread hostility, contempt, abuse or ridicule. Advertisements should not ridicule or put down people in anyway or abuse, put down a certain race or peoples choices in anyway.

Rule #3: Advertisements should not portray people in a manner which, taking into account generally prevailing community standards, is reasonably likely to cause serious or widespread offence on the grounds of their gender; race; colour; ethnic or national origin; age; cultural, religious, political or ethical belief; sexual orientation; marital status; education; disability; occupational or employment status. Adverts should not discriminate the things anybody believes in or what ethnic group you come from. This code helps prevent racism and people being told lies on ethnic groups on TV, and does not allow you to rule out certain groups because of what they believe in on TV. 3 4

3 Rule #6: Humour and satire are natural and accepted features of the relationship between individuals and groups within the community. Humorous and satirical treatment of people and groups of people is acceptable, provided that, taking into account generally prevailing community standards, the portrayal is not likely to cause serious or widespread offence, hostility, contempt, abuse or ridicule. This code says that there is a certain point you can lead up to before you are abusing the people's choices of what they believe in and how they live or handle their own lives. It helps prevent people having to watch them get abused on TV because of what they believe in. 4

Discussion: The complaints that I chose was about an ad for Pak'n'Save and how their famous meat week was on. It showed a selection of meat products traveling down a conveyer belt passed a stick figure and a sign that said 'vegetarians' with a cross through it.

② The complaint said this ad 'discriminates against vegetarians and makes fun of them' and a duplicate complaint said that 'he is concerned that this ad will represent a step backwards and reinforce the stereotypes which formed the basis of discrimination in the past'. She was not the only one to complain and say that this ad was discriminating vegetarians and thought it was highly offensive and highly discriminates vegetarians. ②

The codes of people in advertising were set to make an agreement for everybody so they do not feel picked on particularly by being a certain race or belong to a certain group. As in this ad those codes were breached and a large group of vegetarians had taken a large amount of offense during this ad. ⑤

The Decision: The ad was never taken off TV as the Chairman's ruling was no grounds to process that that this ad was not breaching.... basic principles 2, 3 and 6 of the code for people of advertising. ⑤

Conclusion: This ad has made me realise how much vegetarians and other people that belong to a specific group get picked on in advertisement. Also if this ad is not breaching these codes then how far will an ad have to go before they actually do get to a point where the ad is removed. As I think this ad is highly discriminating but obviously the ASA does not think it is discriminating enough to have it removed from T.V. This ad really makes me think about how low a company will go just to get people to laugh at their ad and maybe get them to buy products from their stores. ⑤

I think the general public aren't setting the standards for TV ads but really the advertisers themselves and that the ASA is trying to protect their own company by letting some ads pass through even though they know that these ads are being breached and need to be taken care of. I strongly think this ad should have been passed through and removed because now all companies can discriminate vegetarians to this point and get away with it.