

Student 3: Low Merit

NZQA Intended for teacher use only

Overview:

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is a government program designed to take and sort out issues and complaints from people who believe a certain advertisement has breached the code of practice/ethics. ASA makes the complaints open to be viewed on their website so that people can see what is happening and how they deal with the complaints. The codes of practice are basic “rules” for advertisers on what they can and can’t do. The television advertisement which received a complaint was a Hell’s Pizza TV ad with a man sitting at desk in a dark room explaining pizza roulette, where Hell’s Pizza put hot chilli sauce a random slice of pizza. An elderly woman is then seen taking a slice of pizza and the man exits the room. On the wall there is an inverted cross.

Codes of Ethics, Basic Principle 4 Intention/effect:

This code states that “all advertisements should be prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and to society”. This means that before advertising a product or service the advertisers should analyse the advert and make sure that in no way would the ad cause widespread offense. In this advert the upside down cross had caused offense to more than one person and both thought the advert was “inappropriate”, “denigrating” and “offensive” to Christians. (3) The reason this code exists is to stop adverts from offending a large group of people. Adverts like this are offensive to some Christians and seems as the Christian faith is a very large group it more than likely has offended many people.

Codes of Ethics, Rule 5 Intention/effect:

This rule states “Advertisements should not contain anything which is the light of generally prevailing community standards is likely to cause serious or widespread offence taking into account the context, medium, audience and product (including services)”. This means that it’s not allowed show images such as an inverted cross because it’s offensive to Christians. This would apply in a Libra advert which made fun of a transgender. It degraded them and made them seem like less of a woman. The reason for this rule is to stop people from being offended by what they see on television/internet/movies etc. It is also in place as a guideline for companies to monitor and be careful of what they put in their adverts or on products.

Discussion: During the advert this report is based upon an inverted cross is shown in the background. This has been taking offense to by Christians, as seen in the following quote from the advert complaint. The complaint states “I believe that is is inappropriate for them to attack the Christian faith through selling pizza by denigrating what, to many Christians, is a symbol of the head of our faith, Jesus Christ.” This shows that people have taken offence to the advert and have felt that the group they are part of has been made a mockery of. The complainant believes that this Hell’s Pizza advertisement has breached the Code of Ethics, Basic Principle 4 along with the Code of Ethics, Rule 5. In the complaint, the complainant says that “While I do not like what Hell’s Pizza stands for at all, due to my Christian Faith and also in my vocation as a Christian minister, I respect the right for them to advertise within their genre so to speak.” This shows that they realise that Hell’s Pizza are advertising their genre but the problem is that they made fun of the Christian Faith. This is where the advert breaches the Code of Ethics, Basic Principle 4.

The Decision: The Chairman acknowledged the sincere concern of the complaints. She (the Chairman) said that the inverted cross was a “fleeting” image and was just there to reinforce the devilish theme of the Hell’s Pizza enterprise. Turning to the part of the ad shortly after the inverted cross was shown was the man in the advert saying “for a limited time a little bit like Jesus”. The complaints board had thought about how this could cause major offense taking into account the context, medium and audience. Most of the board realised this was a deliberate provocative act but noted that the confrontational adverts were predictable from this Advertiser. Therefore, the majority of the complaints board said that though the advert had caused offense to Christians, not all were affected as the priest of the prominent Anglican Church, St Matthews In The City, who described the billboards as “funny and clever”. The complaints board decided that the advert did not go so far as to breach the Advertising Codes. The Chairman ruled that there were no grounds to proceed.

4

3

Conclusion: Myself being a Christian made Me question this advert. I thought it was clever what they did but I felt made a mockery of by the insult to my belief in Jesus. They are entitled to their beliefs but to make fun of someone else’s is not okay. I do not agree at all with Hell’s Pizza for several issues and this one included. I feel like these Advertising Codes do help to limit the effects of adverts so as not to cause major offense to many people. If these codes were not in place then the TV would be an unsafe place for people as there would be a lot of hurtful things to see. I am sad to see that this complaint was brushed aside as “no grounds to proceed” when clearly people were offended and the advert had made a snide remark about another’s belief. Why have these codes if the complaints (with evidence for them breaching the codes) are dismissed? These Advertising Codes are important to the social and emotional wellbeing of people. If these are not upheld you could get continually worse adverts being shown.

5