

COMPLAINT NUMBER	17/411
COMPLAINANT	M Pauletich
ADVERTISER	Briscoes Group
ADVERTISEMENT	Briscoes Group, Digital Marketing
DATE OF MEETING	12 December 2017
OUTCOME	Not Upheld

SUMMARY

The video advertisement for Briscoes told the story of 'Trevor' whose family applied on his behalf to have a house makeover for Christmas. The advertisement showed the Briscoes team redecorating his house and throwing a Christmas feast. The voiceover stated that Trevor needed the makeover as "the entire house has been *man decorated*".

The Complainant said the statement 'man decorated' in reference to bad interior design by a man was derogatory and offensive to men and would not be accepted if it referred to 'woman decorated' in the same context.

The Advertiser said the advertisement told the true story of a competition where a family nominated their family member and used the term 'man decorated' in their entry to describe his house and was in no way intended to be offensive.

The Complaints Board considered the statement 'man decorated' in the context in which it was expressed and noted it was clearly positioned as said by the family and was unlikely to cause serious or widespread offence to most people. The Complaints Board ruled the advertisement was not in breach of Rule 5 or Basic Principle 4 of the Code of Ethics Basic Principles 3 or 4 of the Code for People in Advertising.

The Complaints Board ruled the complaint was Not upheld.

[No further action required]

Please note this headnote does not form part of the Decision.

COMPLAINTS BOARD DECISION

The Chair directed the Complaints Board to consider the advertisement with reference to Basic Principle 4 and Rule 5 of the Code of Ethics and Basic Principles 3 and 4 of the Code of Ethics. This required the Complaints Board to consider whether the advertisement contained anything which, in 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) or portrayed people in a manner that was likely to cause to offence on the grounds of on the grounds of their gender; race; colour; ethnic or national

origin; age; cultural, religious, political or ethical belief; sexual orientation; marital status; family status; education; disability; occupational or employment status.

The Complaints Board noted Basic Principle 4 of the Code for People in Advertising allowed for stereotypes to be used to simplify the process of communication in relation to both the product offered and the intended consumer. However, advertisements should not use stereotypes in the portrayal of the role, character and behaviour of groups of people in society which, taking into account generally prevailing community standards, is reasonably likely to cause serious or widespread offence, hostility, contempt, abuse or ridicule.

The Complaints Board were also required to consider whether the advertisement had been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and society.

The Complaints Board ruled the complaint was Not Upheld.

The Complaints

The Complainant was concerned the term 'man decorated' used in the advertisement was offensive as, in their view it "down plays my abilities as a male, but more so because men do not often speak up. Clearly sexism is a real issue in NZs media at the moment, I am disgusted it is allowed to continue against men. As I pointed out, a house that has been 'woman decorated' (with a negative connotation) would not be well accepted."

The Response from Briscoes Group

The Advertiser said the advertisement was "based on a true story with a real family as it's central characters."

The Advertiser said "the family were chosen from an online competition where people nominated themselves or someone they believed was worthy of a Christmas home makeover. The sentiment was set by the family within the tone of their nomination." The Advertiser included an extract from the entry nomination which said, in part: "*My dad has a cute house overlooking the farm/lake Taupo but man does he need some help in the interior! He doesn't have a partner so it is very ummm "man-decorated" he needs new bedding, I don't think anything in the farm house kitchen matches?! Nor has he had new towels in the past ten years!...*"

The Advertiser said, in part: "Our use of the term 'man-decorated' was in no way intended to be derogatory. This was a term that Trevor had originally made about his own interior design prowess and as you will see from the entry reference the family have continued to use and tease him about. Within the script, we acknowledge that the 'man-decorated' description had come from Trevor's kids... The imagery certainly shows that Trevor isn't overly concerned about how things look and this was a tongue-in-cheek way to get that across. We feel that in this context it pertains directly to Trevor rather than as a slight to all men."

Complaints Board Discussion

The Complaints Board noted the concerns of the Complainant said the statement 'man decorated' in reference to bad interior decoration by a man was derogatory and offensive to men and would not be accepted if it referred to 'woman decorated' in the same context.

The Complaints Board noted the explanation from the Advertiser that the advertisement was the result of a competition where a family nominated their family member and used the term 'man decorated' in their entry.

The Complaints Board considered the statement which offended the Complainant in the context in which it was expressed in the advertisement and noted it clearly said "they also mention the entire house has been *man decorated*". The Complaints Board noted the

statement, “man decorated”, was used by the family and presented in the advertisement as such. While the Complaints Board acknowledged the concerns of the Complainant, in its view, the advertisement was unlikely to cause serious or widespread offence to most people and was not in breach of Rule 5 of the Code of Ethics.

The Complaints Board considered whether the term ‘man decorated’ was likely to cause serious or widespread offence to men and, while it noted the offence the reference had caused the Complainant, it did not reach the threshold to breach of Basic Principles 3 or 4 of the Code for People in Advertising.

The Complaints Board noted with regard to portrayal of gender, that a double standard may well exist and that it was the role of the Complaints Board to reflect existing and accepted societal standards, not set them. While it appreciated the concerns of the Complainant, the Complaints Board said the advertisement was mitigated by humour and the context in which the man Trevor had won a competition to have his house redecorated.

The Complaints Board ruled the advertisement had been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility required by Basic Principle 4 of the Code of Ethics and was not in breach of Rule 5 of the Code of Ethics or Basic Principles 3 or 4 of the Code for People in Advertising.

Accordingly, the Complaints Board ruled to Not Uphold the complaint.

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

The video advertisement for Briscoes told the story ‘Trevor’ whose family applied on his behalf to have a house makeover for Christmas. The advertisement showed the Briscoes team redecorating the house and throwing a Christmas feast. The advertisement stated that Trevor needed the makeover as “the entire house has been *man decorated*”.

COMPLAINT FROM M PAULETICH

The term “man decorated” is used. This obviously is in breach of your advertising rules (as listed online) 4. Decency: easily offends community. 5. Offensiveness: clearly offensive to male population, sexist. 9. Testimonials: when I raised my concerns with Briscoes, they stated it was the words of a family member, so it is ok.

Clearly, I find this offensive, not only because it down plays my abilities as a male, but more so because men do not often speak up. Clearly sexism is a real issue in NZs media at the moment, I am disgusted it is allowed to continue against men. As, I pointed out, a house that has been “woman decorated” (with a negative connotation) would not be well accepted. Equal rights and all.

CODE OF ETHICS

Basic Principle 4: All advertisements should be prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and to society.

Rule 5 Offensiveness: Advertisements should not contain anything which in 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).

CODE FOR PEOPLE IN ADVERTISING

Basic Principle 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; family status; education; disability; occupational or employment status.

Basic Principle 4: Stereotypes may be used to simplify the process of communication in relation to both the product offered and the intended consumer. However, advertisements should not use stereotypes in the portrayal of the role, character and behaviour of groups of people in society which, taking into account generally prevailing community standards, is reasonably likely to cause serious or widespread offence, hostility, contempt, abuse or ridicule.

RESPONSE FROM ADVERTISER – BRISCOES GROUP

The Briscoes Christmas Brand TVC to which the complaint pertains was based on a true story with a real family as it's central characters.

The family were chosen from an online competition where people nominated themselves or someone they believed was worthy of a Christmas home makeover. The sentiment was set by the family within the tone of their nomination.

Below is an extract from the entry nomination from Trevor's family;

Nominated: Dad, Trevor Addenbrooke

Story: *My dad is awesome! He loves his grandkids and the kids love him and the farm. Our Christmas is so much fun with way too much food, opening morning presents with the kids who are super excited about santas visit... and compulsory afternoon games (backyard cricket & horse riding). My day is going to miss my sister and her two boys this year as they have just moved to Scotland so I want to do something cool for him. I know my sis will back me up to say he is the best granddad that loves teaching the kids farm stuff and helping out around the community. My dad has a cute house overlooking the farm/lake Taupo but man does he need some help in the interior! He doesn't have a partner so it is very ummm "man-decorated" he needs new bedding, I don't think anything in the farm house kitchen matches?! Nor has he had new towels in the past ten years!...*

The script told the story of the make-over based on a series of interviews with Trevor and his family. The tone is warm and light-hearted.

Our use of the term "man-decorated" was in no way intended to be derogatory. This was a term that Trevor had originally made about his own interior design prowess and as you will see from the entry reference the family have continued to use and tease him about. Within the script, we acknowledge that the 'man-decorated' description had come from Trevor's kids.

The imagery certainly shows that Trevor isn't overly concerned about how things look and this was a tongue-in-cheek way to get that across. We feel that in this context it pertains directly to Trevor rather than as a slight to all men.

When the complainant contacted us via Facebook we explained the context of the statement within our response, how this had come from Trevor and his family and was in no way intended as a commentary on men's ability to decorate.

Although our core shopper is female, Briscoes is a brand that appeals to all New Zealanders. It is never our intention to offend our customers and we strive to remain accessible and representative within our communications.

Contact person for advertising complaints	Liz Hanrahan: Briscoe Group
Name and contact at creative agency	Susan Browne: Ogilvy NZ
Name and contact at media agency	Di Rice: Ogilvy NZ
A basic, neutral description of the advertisement	The advertisement utilises a real family and a home makeover to promote Briscoes as a shopping destination for Christmas homewares.
Date advertisement began	6 November, 2017
Where the advertisement appeared (all locations e.g. TV, Billboard, Newspaper Website)	TV, Facebook.
Is the advertisement still accessible – where and until when?	Scheduled to appear on TV until December 7 th , 2017
A copy of digital media file(s) of the advertisement – if the complaint relates to on-screen graphic, please send a broadcast quality version.	Attached
Who is the product / brand target audience?	Brand: Briscoes Homeware TV Target audience: Females 25-54 years Facebook : AP 25-60
Clear substantiation on claims that are challenged by the complainant.	Refer attached word document.
The response from the advertiser is included in the published decision. The ASA is not able to accept confidential or proprietary information. Please contact the Complaints Manager if this is an issue.	
For Broadcast advertisements:	

A copy of the script	Final script & Storyboards attached.
A copy of the media schedule and spot list	Attached
CAB key number and rating	Cab Number: 71103015 Classification: G
For Digital advertisements:	
What platform tools have you used to target your audience?	Tool: Facebook platform

RESPONSE FROM MEDIA, FACEBOOK

No response received