

DEVELOP STANDARDS FOR DEPICTING VISIBLE MINORITIES IN ADVERTISING AND BROADCASTING

Convenient: Visible minorities are frequently stereotyped in advertising. Advertisements appeal to what is generally well-known in society, and their creators often find racial stereotypes and racial jokes convenient to use. Such advertisements not only embarrass, but reinforce, stereotyping in the society.

Characterized: Advertisements often portray Blacks in low-status occupations or as entertainers and athletes. Chinese and Japanese are frequently characterized as cooks or martial arts exponents. Visible minorities are usually excluded from lifestyle commercials, for example, advertisements showing Canadians in leisure activities. Visible minorities are rarely shown in association with expensive items such as automobiles or large home appliances. Very often visible minorities, especially children, are portrayed in advertisements as needy people in distant places depending on charity.

Persuasion: It is interesting to note that the Advertising Advisory Board has been able to persuade some retailers to withdraw offensive advertising. Persuasion by Human Rights Commissions and community groups has also been successful, for example, in the case in Nova Scotia of an escort agency named after the Suzie Wong of movie fame. However, a determined Ukrainian businessman was able to defy an appeal by the Ukrainian community to the British Columbia Human Rights Commission to stop him from calling his food chain by the name Hunky Bill.

Declined: The Committee commends radio station CKFM of Toronto and other broadcast media for declining commercials deemed to be offensive. CKFM expressed to the Committee its willingness to discuss these commercials with other stations.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Advertising Standards Council should develop a code for depicting visible minorities in print advertising.

RECOMMENDATION

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