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ASA Adjudication on Moet Hennessy UK Ltd

Moet Hennessy UK Ltd

13 Grosvenor Crescent
London
SW1X 7EE

Date:

24 December 2014

Media:

National press

Sector:

Food and drink

Number of complaints:

1

Agency:

BBDO New York

Complaint Ref:

A14-282746

Ad

A national press ad for Belvedere Vodka featured a group of friends on a night out, posing for a group photo. Text stated "THERE'S A NIGHT OUT. AND THERE'S A NIGHT OUT. BELVEDERE VODKA. KNOW THE DIFFERENCE".

Issue

The complainant challenged whether the ad was irresponsible because they believed it implied that drinking alcohol was a key component of a night out.

CAP Code (Edition 12)

1.318.3

Response

Moët Hennessy UK Ltd believed the ad did not feature alcohol as a key component of a night out and that the participants in the image were clearly part of a social event. They said the ad featured a group of friends at a house party and that although the image showed a few characters wearing a masquerade mask or holding a carnival maraca, the characters were not shown to be drinking and did not appear to be intoxicated. They believed the ad was suggestive of a "night out" involving friends going to a house party where "those in the know" would seek out a more unconventional night and that those characters would "Know the difference" irrespective of whether or not they drank Belvedere. They therefore believed the ad did not suggest the characters pictured benefited from drinking Belvedere and that there was no suggestion that alcohol was an integral part of the evening or contributed to social success. .

They said they had sought advice from the Copy Advice team in CAP on the campaign and were advised not to use the text alongside other images (such as an image showing a party scene with a woman standing on a table). They explained that they had followed this advice by not using those images and believed the image they used in this ad complied with that CAP advice and therefore the advertising Code.

The Telegraph said the ad featured a group of people on a night out that appeared to be exceptionally enjoyable and believed consumers were being asked to draw a comparison between the quality of the night out itself and the quality of Belvedere Vodka, the implication being that Belvedere was exceptional too. Given that none of the people in the ad were shown to be drinking, or to have been drinking, they believed the ad did not portray alcohol as being key to the group's enjoyment.

Assessment

Upheld

The ASA noted the ad featured a group of friends who appeared to be either at a bar or party and which showed most of the characters on a sofa with a woman lying across their knees. The image also featured one man in a masquerade mask, one with a maracas instrument and with his bow tie undone and another behind the group with an arm raised in celebration. The characters appeared to be posing for a group photo and in high spirits.

Whilst the ad did not feature any alcohol being consumed, we considered the very playful scene, alongside the text "There's a night out. And there's a night out" and the image of the Belvedere vodka bottle superimposed over the main image, suggested that alcohol had been consumed prior to the 'photo' being taken and that alcohol was therefore partly responsible for the featured scene. Furthermore, in the context of an ad for vodka which featured an image of a people at a party, we considered the strapline "There's a night out. And there's a night out" would be understood by consumers as a reference to the enjoyment of a party or night out (such as the one featured in the

image) with the vodka product being consumed, compared to the enjoyment of a night out without it. Whilst the ad did not make any references to excessive alcohol consumption, we considered the juxtaposition of the strapline, the image of the vodka bottle and the image of the group of people suggested that alcohol was the major element of the apparent success of the featured party. We therefore considered the ad implied that alcohol was a key component of a social event and concluded that the ad breached the Code.

The ad breached CAP Code (Edition 12) rules 1.3 (Social responsibility) and 18.3 (Alcohol).

Action

The ad should not appear again in its current form.

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