

Six top tips to avoid misleading advertising

CAP News | 28 January 2021

Year on year, roughly 70% of the complaints the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) receives relate to misleading advertising, proving that this is an issue that consumers take seriously and that all marketers should be mindful of.

Here are our top tips to help you avoid the most common mistakes:

1 Don't omit key information

All relevant information, including significant conditions to an offer, should be made clear in the ad itself. These should be stated close, or clearly linked, to the main claim. Significant conditions will vary depending on the circumstances, and we have further guidance on Promotional Marketing if you're looking for more detail.

2 Make sure your pricing is clear

Pricing should relate to the product advertised and include all non-optional charges (such as VAT and booking fees). We recently produced new guidance for secondary ticket providers and updated our guidance for the travel sector, and we have specific guidance for other sectors too, but the main principles apply across all sectors. Also, don't forget about delivery charges.

3 Don't exaggerate the capability or performance of a product

Advertising is all about presenting a product in the best possible light, but don't over-claim in a way that's likely to mislead. Obvious exaggerations that the average consumer is unlikely to take literally (and that are unlikely to mislead) are allowed though.

4 Ensure any qualifications are clear

Qualifying text (small print or footnotes) can be used to clarify a claim in an ad, but don't use it to hide important information or in a way that misleadingly contradicts the headline claim. For example, it's often contradictory to claim "X% Off Everything! *" and then qualify this with "*exclusions apply".

5 Have the evidence to back up your claims

Remember that before you run an ad, you should hold adequate evidence to support all objective claims or those that are capable of objective substantiation, bearing in mind the impression consumers are likely to take from the ad. The level of evidence that is required will depend on the type of claim being made and the product in question. For example, for some health, beauty or slimming claims robust clinical trials may be required.

6 Be careful of claims in product names

Remember that all ad content, including your company or product names can count as potential claims. If your product name implies an unproven effect or benefit, this could be problematic – even if it appears in a pack shot.

Ring [020 7492 2100](tel:02074922100), between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday for general advice about the CAP Code if you have any questions, or [send your specific queries](#), to the CAP Copy Advice Team.

April 2021