

Full title Rules on humour in advertising

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#### C. Humour in advertising (1992)

As in any communication, humour is not in itself objectionable/ reprehensible (unacceptable). However, since advertising is a communication with a commercial purpose, humour is subject to restrictions distinct from those found in other areas – such as editorial content in the media, or in the world of entertainment or folklore.

Moreover, the use of humour (in written form, audio, visual, graphic) never absolves the author or creator of the message from legal or ethical responsibility. Advertising cannot be made which is contrary to the law or rules of advertising ethics.

So, humour must not lead to:

- deception/ misleadingness about measurable and verifiable facts
- denigrating or discrediting:
  - a product or service
  - a person or group of people
  - an institution or organization
  - moral, religious, philosophical or political convictions
- use of disparaging/ derogatory references or indications based on the gender, age, race, nationality, social or economic status of individuals.
- the incitement of reprehensible behaviour in terms of safety, health or social responsibility.

The use of caricature or parody therefore requires caution and requires a case-by-case assessment. The use of prior copy advice from JEP in sufficient time before production and dissemination of the advert is highly recommended.

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