[IE] Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland Issues New Codes

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Candelaria van Strien-Reney
Faculty of Law, National University of Ireland, Galway

The Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland (ASAI) is an independent self-regulatory body set up and financed by the advertising industry. Although the amount of legislation governing advertising in Ireland is increasing, advertising remains largely self-regulatory. The ASAI publishes two Codes, which are updated regularly.

The Codes cover commercial advertisements: these are characterised as where the advertiser pays or compensates a third party to communicate the commercial message. It covers advertising that has a "paid for" space in the media, which now includes the Internet. In line with the rules applying to traditional media, the editorial or self-advertising content of websites is not covered. In other words, the Codes do not in general cover the content of websites other than advertisements in "paid-for" space within the website. The same principles apply to sales promotions.

The most recent editions of the Codes, which are the Code of Advertising Standards for Ireland (5 edition) and the Code of Sales Promotion Practice (3 edition), were published in 2001 and came into force on 1 April 2002. Among the changes introduced by the new Codes are: the tightening of rules on the quoting of prices to make total costs clearer and to avoid exaggerating the availability of products and services; a strengthening of the rules relating to advertising and children, even where the advertising is not directed at children, particularly the rules on alcohol advertising; clarification that sales promotion and advertising on the Internet are covered by the Codes; point-of-sale advertising will now be covered by the Codes when it is part of a wider advertising campaign or part of a sales promotion; advertisers must have signed and dated proof of any testimonials, trials, etc., relied upon to support their advertising claims. The rules on Environmental Claims have also been strengthened.

The rules on offensiveness in advertising have been broadened to include the categories of persons protected by the Equal Status Act, 2000 (i.e., gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller Community). Advertisers are thus encouraged to be responsive to the diversity in Irish society.

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Full texts of the Code of Advertising Standards for Ireland (5th edition) and the Code of Sales Promotion Practice (3rd edition), 2001

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