

PRESS RELEASE



ASCI launches “Advertising Advice” service to help brands determine if their ads violate any ASCI code

- *Expert panel will offer non-binding advice, at a pre-production stage, on advertising claims and depictions*
- *Will help advertisers mitigate the risk of ads being misleading, offensive, unfair or unsafe, and ensure more responsible advertising*

Mumbai, 22nd September 2021: In order to aid responsible advertising practices and help brands be more mindful of the claims they make in their campaigns, the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) has launched an “Advertising Advice” service. This paid service is open to all members and non-members of ASCI. It will point out to advertisers and marketers, at the campaign planning stage, if their claims could potentially violate any ASCI code or guideline. This will help them to take corrective action at the pre-production phase and will guide them to substantiate the claim and align the creative basis the ASCI code.

As a self-regulatory body, ASCI aims not just to be an industry watchdog, but also help protect consumers from objectionable ads in the first place. For the advertisers, it provides confidential quick expertise to help them make more responsible advertising. Advertisers will be able to modify claims and depictions at the pre-production stage itself, thus saving them effort, money as well as possible loss of reputation once the advertisement is already in the marketplace. The service aims to help advertisers balance creativity with responsibility and is being offered in line with best global practices followed by different self-regulatory organizations. What is quite unique in the ASCI Advertising Advice service is that the Advertising Advice panel will also include technical experts in different specialties who can examine the claim and evidence for technical claim support.

It is important to note that this service is not intended to be a pre-clearance, and advertisers may use the advice to better their ads in a manner they deem fit.

The Advertising Advice provided by the technical team and subject experts will not be a pre-clearance of the advertisement and neither is it a guarantee against complaints being filed by consumers. However, the service is expected to mitigate the risk of advertising being misleading, offensive, unsafe or unfair. ASCI will process any complaints they receive against such ads as per its normal process. The advisory panel for Advertising Advice service is completely different from the complaints process to avoid any potential conflicts.

Subhash Kamath, Chairman, ASCI, said: "As ASCI steps into its next phase, the Advertising Advice service will be a crucial element in the cause of self-regulation. The service gives brands a chance to better prepare their campaigns and mitigate reputational risks. While there is no guarantee that consumers will not raise a claim against a brand, the advisory does help brands take steps to ensure that their campaigns don't violate any norms formulated to protect consumer interest. We believe that this advisory service will provide the necessary support to the advertising ecosystem to create more responsible ads without affecting creativity."

Manisha Kapoor, Secretary-General, ASCI, said: "The advisory can be used by brands to great effect while planning their campaigns. Brands wish to be competitive and push the boundaries of claims. With this service, we can support advertisers to make strong claims while not crossing the all-important lines of honesty, decency, fairness and safety. An external scrutiny by experts at the pre-production stage can add tremendous value to campaign development. Post release of the campaign, any stoppage can cause significant disruption and cost for an organization. But by making this a part of the way advertiser's think of campaigns at an early stage, such risks can be mitigated. We see this as a win-win for advertisers and consumers, who then get exposed to fewer problematic ads"

To know more about ASCI's ad advisories, please reach out to us at advisory@ascionline.in