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YEARS

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ASA Adjudication on Metropolitan International Schools Ltd

Metropolitan International Schools

Ltd t/a SkillsTrain

211 Piccadilly

London

W1J 9HF

Date: 22 August 2007

Media: Television

Sector: Employment

Number of complaints: 1

Agency: The Response Team Ltd

Complaint Ref: 30309

Ad

A TV ad, for IT courses, stated "If your job is boring you to tears get on the SkillsTrain today ... Every year thousands of people come aboard to gain industry recognised qualifications for better prospects, more money and opportunity. With SkillsTrain you control how fast you learn and with total support in your own home you won't have to give up your job to complete your training. You could be qualified in nine months. You could be earning anything between thirty and fifty thousand pounds a year. Now there's a good reason to quit your job. Whatever IT career you dream of, SkillsTrain can put you on the right track."

Issue

A viewer complained that the ad was misleading because it exaggerated the earnings participants were likely to achieve on completion of the advertised courses.

Assessment

Upheld

The ASA noted SkillsTrains argument that the quoted figures did not refer to starting salaries, but, rather, represented earnings that could be achieved in careers that used the IT skills they taught. We also noted their claim that viewers would understand that future earnings would depend on the type of course taken and the career pursued thereafter.

We noted the substantiation showed that some IT qualifications offered by SkillsTrain could lead to a job with an average salary within the quoted range. We also noted, however, they offered other qualifications such as N+ (for Network Engineers) and A+ (for PC Engineers) that were not listed in the substantiation, which they estimated on their website would lead to jobs with typical salaries of substantially less than £30,000 per year. We considered that viewers would realise that people who obtained the qualification were not guaranteed to get jobs within the advertised salary range because other factors such as an applicants experience and other skills would influence their success in getting a job. We considered, however, that the statement "you could be earning anything between ..." implied that a salary of at least the minimum sum could generally be attainable by those who obtained an IT qualification at SkillsTrain. We also considered that the overall impression given by the voice-over "You could be qualified in nine months. You could be earning anything between thirty and fifty thousand pounds a year" was that a salary within that range could be achieved immediately after qualification. We concluded that the claims were likely to mislead viewers.

The ad breached CAP (Broadcast) TV Advertising Standards Code rules 5.1 (Misleading advertising), 5.2.1 (Evidence) and 5.2.2 (Implications)

Action

We told SkillsTrain not to use the salary range in future advertising.

Adjudication of the ASA Council (Broadcast)