

ASA Adjudication on Cassava Enterprises (Gibraltar) Ltd

Cassava Enterprises (Gibraltar) Ltd t/a 888.com

Suite 607/701
Europort
Gibraltar

Date:

11 May 2011

Media:

Internet (display)

Sector:

Leisure

Number of complaints:

1

Complaint Ref:

150239

Ad

A banner ad on Facebook on 24 February 2011, for a gambling website, stated "Addicted to slots? 888promos.com" and featured a picture of a fruit machine. Further text stated "Register in 888casino & get 7 spins every week for a whole year ABSOLUTELY FREE! Get the chance to win every day. No deposit necessary."

Issue

The complainant challenged whether the ad was irresponsible, because it played on addiction to encourage people to gamble.

Response

Cassava Enterprises (Gibraltar) Ltd, trading as 888.com (888), explained that they had appointed a third-party agency to manage and create ads for social networking sites, including Facebook. They pointed out that the ad had been created and published by the agency without first consulting them about its content. They said they had not received any notifications in relation to the ad from the agency or Facebook, or any complaints from Facebook users about the ad, and they therefore did not know the ad had been published until they received the complaint notification from the ASA, at which point they instructed the

agency to remove the ad immediately. They said they have asked the agency to send all ad proposals to them for prior approval in the future.

888 said that whilst they did not condone the content of the ad, they noted it was targeted at a UK male audience aged between 29 and 53 years and not specifically at children, young or vulnerable persons.

Facebook said they operated a self-service advertising platform and considered that advertisers were solely responsible for the copy and images in their ads. They explained that Facebook users were able to rate ads based on a pre-selected variety of responses and that they looked at feedback in aggregate rather than on an individual basis. They noted that the ad had received an average amount of negative feedback. They said that, having looked at the ad, they considered it had violated their advertising guidelines and they confirmed that the ad had been removed from the site.

Assessment

Upheld

The ASA welcomed 888's explanation that they had removed the ad on notification of the complaint. However, we were concerned that the ad used the idea of addiction to encourage people to sign up to 888.com in order to receive free weekly spins. We considered that in doing so the ad trivialised gambling addiction, and condoned and encouraged gambling behaviour that could lead to financial, social or emotional harm. We therefore concluded that the ad was irresponsible.

The ad breached CAP Code (Edition 12) rules 1.3 (Social responsibility), 16.1, 16.3.1 and 16.3.2 (Gambling).

Action

The ad must not appear again in its current form.

Adjudication of the ASA Council (Non-broadcast)