

## ETHICS IN TELEVISION ADVERTISING: AN ASSESSMENT

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More than any tool of communication, television advertising has diffused information about commodities and services, marketed them and persuaded audiences of their important place in their lives. However, television advertising, has done more than these. They have become vignettes of social life. They portray individuals as having many social relationships. They suggest ways of dealing with those relationships. They advice a great deal about one's work, health, lifestyle and role in society.

Television advertising has played a very important role of initiating social change. They have become a kind of a social guide depicting us in all the myriad situations possible to a life of a free choice.

Advertisers now realize that television advertising should not only be a guide to consumption for them to increase sales. They now have accepted the fact that they should focus more on their social concern to the public they seek to serve. Hence, the increasing observance of ethical principles in television advertising.

The study is limited to the advertisements of Ace Saatchi and Saatchi. It seeks to evaluate the consistency of the television advertising of Ace Saatchi and Saatchi with the Code of Ethics of the Philippine Association of National Advertisers. The advertisements were rated based on whether: 1. they contribute to the building of a civilized society, 2. they give information about the product to help the viewers buy intelligently, 3. they do not imitate, 4. tell the truth, accurate, honest and trustworthy, 5. conform to laws and generally accepted standards of good taste and decency, 6. seek public

acceptance on the basis of positive and constructive statements, 7. they avoid deception through implication or omission, and 8. they help build the dignity of the individual.

The question is, what can television advertising do to motivate their viewers to act more ethically once they move beyond watching television. The important task is for television advertisers to show to their viewers the relevance of ethics in their everyday lives. The viewers must translate those ethics in their relationships with people. Advertisers will never appreciate the "marriage" of ethics and advertising if they fail to view their consumers and the general public as persons whom they have an obligation. It is essential that advertisers recognize that ethical behavior in advertising does not occur in a vacuum. Advertisers should first be persons of ethics. And the only way for them to act ethically is for them to develop the will to act ethically, habitually, and generally. Raising the consumer's ethical consciousness is not sufficient. In the end, advertising people will also be judged not only on their advertisements but more on their conduct.